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Unemployment

The Results of an Investigation made in Lancashire

AND

An Examination of the Report of the Poor Law Commission

BY

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PREFACE.

THE bulk of this work, apart from the *Examination of the Report of the Poor Law Commission*, appeared originally in the form of articles in the *Manchester Guardian*, and they are now republished in an amplified form with the consent of the Editor, to whom we desire to express our obligations. We desire also to offer our cordial thanks to the many persons who, in replies to circulars and letters and in private interviews, have materially assisted our investigation, and to the public authorities which have placed information at our disposal.

S. J. C.

H. M. H.

THE UNIVERSITY, MANCHESTER,

April, 1909.

CONTENTS.

PAGE

An Examination of the Reports on Unemployment of the Poor Law Commission, 1909 - - - - 1

Unemployment in Lancashire.

Chapter I.—Nature and Bearing of the Investigation 29

Value of local investigations—Character of the problem—Causes and cures—Outlines of the field covered.

Chapter II.—Unemployed Trade Unionists - - 33

The proper meaning of Unemployment—Monthly returns of the Trade Unions—The attitude of the modern business man during the trade cycle—Chart of Unemployment—The abnormal collapse of the shipbuilding industry—Short-time or under-employment—Trade Union policy during depression—Elastic wages—Employment in November—The number of unemployed in Lancashire.

Chapter III.—Extent of Unemployment and Short-time - - - - - - - - - - - 45

Methods of dealing with contraction of work—Extent of dismissal of hands—Extent of short-time—The increasing use of the method of short-time—Methods adopted in typical industries—Charts of Short-time—Recent changes in industry—The relation of age and unemployment.

PAGE

Chapter IV.—Unemployment revealed by Distress Committees, Guardians, and Censuses - - 60

Unemployment among non-unionists — The wages of the non-unionist—Records of Labour Exchanges—Unregistered labour—The registers of Lancashire Distress Committees—Areas in which no relief of distress is provided—Local variations in recorded unemployment—Estimate of unemployed non-unionists in Lancashire—The numbers in receipt of Poor Law relief—Personal causes of unemployment—The necessity of a proper census of unemployment—Censuses of Ancoats and Manchester.

Chapter V.—Ages, Trades, and Past Work of the Unemployed - - - - - - - - 72

The age-distribution of the unemployed—Severity of unemployment among those in the prime of life—The greater immunity of the skilled worker—*Cul-de-sac* employment and the young—Employment agencies for boys and girls—Continuation schools and technological education—Skill as opposed to dexterity—The intensity of unemployment — The duration of previous employment—Classification by trades—Physical condition—Reasons for loss of last situation.

Chapter VI.—Unemployment among Women - 85

The nature of unemployment among women—Its special importance in Lancashire—Casual women workers and industrial depression—Extent of unemployment — The returns of Women's Labour Bureaux—Position of the skilled worker—The age-distribution of unemployed women—Sewing-rooms.

PAGE

Chapter VII.—Unemployment Cycles - - - 93

Causes of unemployment—The origin of the trade cycle — Cyclical movement of trade — Economic waste—The growth of forces checking the trade cycle—Recent harvests—The trade with the East—Relation of the trade cycle to other variables—Effect of the trade cycle on the workers —The march of industrial progress.

Chapter VIII.—Seasonality and Insurance - - 105

Seasonality in demand and in supply—The extent of seasonality—Seasonal and non-seasonal trades—The difficulties of insurance—The position of trades unions—Insurance in Belgium—Subsidising of savings—The case of decaying industries —General conclusions.

Chapter IX.—The Public Provision of Work - - 115

The necessity of provision of real work—Inverse variation of public demand for labour with market demand—The relief works of Lancashire—Kinds of work provided—The amount of voluntary contributions—Local variations in amount of relief afforded—Anticipation of distress —Organisation of relief work—The necessity of relief work being continuous—Rate of wages—The value of 'unemployed' labour—Facts relating to applicants for relief work—The need of selection—Relief work and its effect on the general demand for labour—Labour colonies—Case of the 'feeble-minded'—Afforestation as a means of relieving distress.

PAGE

Chapter X.—Labour Exchanges - - - - 134

The need of labour exchanges—The social *time-lag*—Trade unions as registry offices—Labour exchanges in Lancashire—The organisation of an exchange—Work done by various exchanges during November, 1908—Demand for certain kinds of labour greater than supply—Necessity of co-ordination—German labour exchanges—Value of a well-organised system of exchanges—The problem of casual labour—Decasualization of dock labour—The 'preference list' system.

Chapter XI.—Summary and Conclusions - - 150

Personal causes—Impersonal economic forces—Unemployment classified—The cause and cure of casualism—Improved education—Provision of work during depression—Absorption by an industry of its own unemployed—Inefficiency and its cure.

CHARTS AND TABLES.

Table		Page
I.	Unemployed Percentage, Jan.—Dec. 1908	36
II.	Unemployed Percentage, Nov. and Jan. 1904—1909 ...	42
III.	Unemployed Percentage, Lancashire Trade Unions ...	43
IV.	Percentage Contraction of Work, Dismissal of Hands and Short Time in the Chief Industries	49–50
V.	Relation between Contraction of Output and Dismissal of Hands in certain Industries	55–6
VI.	Relation of number of Accidents to Age of Workmen ...	58–9
VII.	Returns of Lancashire Labour Exchanges, Nov. 1908 to Feb. 1909	62
VIII.	Returns of Lancashire Distress Committees, Nov. 1908	64
IX.	Unemployed Percentage—Ancoats	70
X.	Age-distribution of Applicants to Labour Exchanges ...	73
XI.	Age-distribution of Unemployed—Manchester Census ...	74
XII.	Age-distribution of Applicants to Distress Committees...	75
XIII.	Duration of Unemployment among Applicants to Manchester Labour Exchange	79
XIV.	Duration of Unemployment shown by Manchester Census	80
XV.	Duration of previous Employment—Manchester, Salford and London Unemployed	81
XVI.	Trade-analysis of Unemployed—Lancashire	82
XVII.	Reasons for leaving previous Situation	84
XVIII.	Returns of Women's Labour Exchanges — Liverpool, Manchester and Warrington	88
XIX.	Work done by Women's Labour Exchanges	89
XX.	Occupations of Unemployed Women—Manchester ...	90
XXI.	Duration of Unemployment among Women	91
XXII.	Age-distribution of Women Applicants to Manchester Labour Exchange	91
XXIII.	Age-distribution of Unemployed Women—Manchester Census	92
XXIV.	Exports of the United Kingdom, 1905—8	99
XXV.	Cyclical Fluctuation of Unemployment	100
XXVI.	State of Employment in 1908 compared with its state in previous periods of Bad Trade...	101
XXVII.	Seasonal Fluctuation of Unemployment	107
XXVIII.	Seasonal Fluctuation of Output and Unemployment ...	108
XXIX.	Work done by Lancashire Distress Committees	117
XXX.	Amount of Relief afforded to Unemployed Applicants...	119
XXXI.	Value of Unemployed Labour	122
XXXII.	Facts relating to Applicants for Relief-work...	124–6
XXXIII.	Balance Sheet of Salteye Farm Colony	129
XXXIV.	Work done by Labour Exchanges	141

An Examination of the Report of the Poor Law Commission on Unemployment

AN EXAMINATION OF THE REPORT OF THE POOR LAW COMMISSION ON UNEMPLOYMENT.

For many years to come no book which pretends to discuss the questions covered by the exhaustive enquiries of the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws will be complete which does not include ample reference to its recommendations. The Blue Book which has just appeared is, beyond dispute, one of the weightiest social documents issued since its predecessor, in the same field, of 1834; and nobody can say yet whether it will rank second in effectiveness even to that. It is urgent that the public should at once deliberate upon the several proposals put forward: published comments prompted by inferences drawn direct from the facts of unemployment should be an aid to such deliberations.

It is now a matter of common knowledge that the Royal Commission failed to attain unanimity. A majority report signed by all the Commissioners but four is supplemented by a few dissentient notes on points of detail, and is accompanied by an almost equally lengthy minority report to which are appended the signatures of Mr. Francis Chandler, Mr. George Lansbury, Prebendary H. Russell Wakefield, and Mrs. Sidney Webb. The two reports being printed at the two ends of the bulky volume now before us, with a Rubicon of blue paper in between, would suggest striking divergences of opinion; but, as regards the problem of unemployment, the divergences are neither fundamental, nor, we imagine, beyond reconciliation in a compromise which would substantially embody the views of both parties.

The Commissioners in the majority hold that the industrialising of the country has brought about conditions favourable to the emergence of an under-employed class. They rightly draw attention to the relatively expanding demand for intelligence and skill, and point to the drift of the youth of the country through *cul-de-sac* boy employments into the ranks of the ill-paid and casually employed. Upon this question they speak in no uncertain tones. The almost universal experience is that, " in large towns, boys, owing to carelessness or selfishness on the part of parents, or their own want of knowledge and forethought—for the parents very often have little voice in the matter—plunge haphazard, immediately on leaving school, into occupations in which there is no future. . . . . According to the main statistical sources of information available, the very serious fact emerges that between 70 per cent. and 80 per cent. of boys leaving elementary schools enter unskilled occupations. . . . . The problem owes its rise in the main to the enormous growth of cities as distributive centres—chiefly and most disastrously, London—giving innumerable openings for errand boys, milk boys, office and shop boys, bookstall boys, van, lurry and trace boys, street sellers, etc. In nearly all these occupations the training received leads to nothing; and the occupations themselves are, in most cases, destructive to healthy development, owing to long hours, long periods of standing, walking, or mere waiting, and morally are wholly demoralising." The minority report is no less pronounced and unhesitating in its judgment upon this matter.

According to the majority report, a new problem, which means chronic under-employment, has been created for this generation by the comparatively unrestrained individualism of the last. One aspect of this new problem is presented by casual labour; but it is pointed out that from industries using much and expen-

sive plant, the range of which is extending, the system of casual employment is being squeezed out because it does not pay. Comparing the present with the past, we may suggest that casualism in work naturally results from division of labour, and that probably it will be as naturally destroyed by further division of labour in the form of specialism of machinery—when, it is impossible to say, though certainly we should be short-sighted in trusting that the destruction will be complete after two generations and in believing that it will be rapid if unaided. There can be no doubt but that the evil of casual labour is of gigantic dimensions now and must be deliberately attacked. Upon this question there is substantial agreement between the two reports.

Hardly less disastrous, according to both reports, is much of the seasonality of work found under modern conditions; but it is uncertain to what extent this can be represented as a new condition. Probably, as a trouble to be dealt with by the organised intelligence of the community, it is new, though a high degree of seasonality characterised productive activities prior to the industrial transformations of the early part of the last century. Still, in those days the individual who performed many tasks could more easily fill in the intervals occasioned by the seasonality of his main business. The trouble is the 'specialising out' of seasonality unaccompanied by organisation designed to restore the by-employments. In Chapter VIII. we have made a careful analysis of the causes of seasonality, and ventured some forecasts.

The third element in the new problem defined in the majority report is found in the "unemployables." This term has come to mean "not only the imbecile, the drunkard, the impotent, but also the person who cannot conform to the requirements of a highly artificial and exacting system of industry, or find any employer who can give the time and pains to find him a place where

his services are worth a wage." In view of this, the majority report enumerates four classes of the 'unemployables,' which again might be almost indefinitely subdivided. Unemployables may be—(*a*) the physically unfit; (*b*) those suffering from slight physical or mental defects; (*c*) skilled men who have been displaced but have not had the alertness or energy to train themselves for another skilled trade; (*d*) the men 'too old at fifty.'

This classification leaves us a little dubious. Individuals in the third class, for instance, call for training but they are not strictly unemployable as they are. After being discarded, for a time they hope for the old wage and the old work, but finally they adapt themselves to the next best thing, which may be much inferior, and might be made much better if the training were provided which is recommended in both reports. They run the risk of becoming the under-employed or the poorly paid, but they are not yet 'unemployable.' However, this is mainly a matter of terminology. As regards the fourth class, it is certain that employers frequently try to get as high a proportion of men under fifty as they can, but the inference that this disposition on the part of employers would leave the man of fifty out of work implies that as many people under fifty can be got as are needed, which, according to theory, can hardly be the case. Improved machinery, according to theory, should render more, not fewer, men self-supporting. The older men cannot strictly be likened to 'superannuated fishing boats,' because fishing boats do not feel wants and express them in demand. The minority Commissioners are quite sure that any displacement of older men is certainly not on the increase, and support our deductive argument with some evidence of fact. "We . . . . sought for some evidence that elderly men, or men who appeared to be elderly, were actually being excluded from employment at an earlier age than had previously been customary. It appeared that, of all the many

witnesses who repeated to us the current popular opinion, not one could produce any sort of statistical evidence in its support. If men are being dismissed at an earlier age, it would result in the average age of all the men in the employment of particular firms, or of all the men in employment at particular trades, steadily falling. In no case have we been able to find that this was the fact. On the contrary, trade-union statistics indicate that the age at which members have to draw their superannuation allowance (on ceasing to be able to get employment) has, with the improved health of the nation, steadily risen. Thus, in the great Union of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, the average age of all the members, who, year by year, begin to draw their superannuation benefit on finding themselves unable to continue in wage-earning employment, *steadily rises*. In 1885 it was sixty-one and a half years; in 1906 it was sixty-three and a half; in 1907 (possibly through increased strictness) it even rose to sixty-four and three-quarters. The fact is confirmed by the records of other unions. Thus, in the Friendly Society of Ironfounders, the average age at superannuation in 1883–5 was sixty-one and three-quarter years; in 1906–7 it was sixty-two and three-quarters. A similar rise is to be seen in the records of the United Society of Boiler-makers."

We have no hesitation in saying, however, that the majority report makes out a strong case for the admission of lower rates of pay for those whose vitality is on the decline. This is a matter to which the trade unions should devote most careful attention, and already some unions have seen the force of the argument and allowed special rates for the elderly and defective. From this conclusion we think the minority would not dissent, though the following passage in their report leaves a shadow of doubt:—"The example of women disposes we think, of the suggestion which has been quite seriously made to us, that *unemployment might be*

prevented if only the workers would accept lower wages." Hardly, it could be responded (if a denial of the doctrine that the quantity of any given class of labour demanded varies inversely as the wage is intended, which seems improbable), unless women were perfect substitutes for men at most kinds of work. Low wages in times of good trade are certainly no cure for unemployment in times of bad trade, but lower wages for the elderly and in times of depression might prevent a few people from being dismissed. Nevertheless we are not prepared to contend that to allow a reduction of wages when trade gets bad is necessarily wise, though we do believe that if wages rose rapidly when trade boomed, particularly if they did the same abroad, the rhythmical fluctuations of production would be checked, and are, therefore, disposed to ask for careful consideration of arrangements under which wages would be more elastic, a matter to which we have given attention in Chapters II. and III.

Recurring to the position of the elderly man in industry to-day, we may now ask the pertinent question whether the Workmen's Compensation Act has placed him at a disadvantage. Those who signed the majority report found the evidence conflicting, and are not prepared fully to commit themselves, though they quote Sir George Livesey's experience to the effect that from 25 to 30 is "the most dangerous age." Such evidence as we have met with in Lancashire would seem on the whole to confirm this view (see Chapter III.). It is cheering to find the minority Commissioners roundly asserting that any displacement under the Act has been due to a groundless scare. In the first place, they deny, as we have seen, that there is evidence of any greater contraction of demand for older men, and, in the second place, they refuse to admit that the Workmen's Compensation Act affords any reason for it. "It was suggested to us that the insurance companies were

stipulating in their policies against the employment of elderly men, or penalising it by heavier premiums. We accordingly took steps to ascertain whether this was the case. We were definitely informed by the Chairman of the Associated Accident Insurance Companies transacting workmen's compensation business that 'in the case of general industries no restriction or stipulation is made in the contract of insurance with regard to . . . old men or men past middle life.' It was admitted to us by employers that the insurance companies did not inquire the ages of the men thus insured, and that there was no attempt made to differentiate against the elderly men. As a matter of fact the insurance companies are under no temptation to do so, because—as was pointed out by the workmen who knew the facts—contrary to current popular theories, it is not found that the elderly men are more liable to accidents than the young men . . . and though the elderly man may not so easily recover from an accident as a young man, and may be longer in the doctors' hands, the remarkable statistical proof that has been adduced (in figures laid before the Commission) has confirmed the accident insurance companies in their practice of ignoring age in their estimation of risk."

Another kind of displacement has been repeatedly alleged, namely, that of men by women, children and young persons, and inasmuch as examples of this kind of substitution in particular trades and places might be multiplied almost indefinitely one can scarcely wonder that the generalisation has been framed. In order to assure themselves upon this point the Commission procured from the Board of Trade a memorandum on *the extent to which female and juvenile labour has displaced adult labour in the last twenty years*. This document would seem to put it beyond question that such a displacement does not appear when industry is viewed in the aggregate. With regard to the allegation in its reference to women, the teaching of statistics is

least clear, but it shows that " about four-fifths of the occupied male population are engaged in employments which they monopolise, or in which women are a negligible factor as regards possible competition. . . . Only one-fifth of the males are engaged in trades where women enter to the extent of 1 per cent. of the whole number of occupied females." The conclusion of the majority report is that " while women and juveniles are now engaged in many industries in which the specialisation of machinery enables them to take part, they are not, in any considerable trade or process, displacing adult males in the sense that they are being more largely employed to do work identical with that formerly done by men. The great expansion of women's labour seems to have been in new fields of employment, or in fields which men never occupied. It should also be borne in mind that, even when women are employed where men used to be employed, this is largely due to the men going into more highly paid industries."

This roughly completes the first analysis of the situation except for the presentment of that 'shadow side of progress,' the trade cycle. That the trade cycle is on the whole unalterable for this generation, and that it creates its thousands of unemployed as its black side comes round, the Commissioners do not attempt to deny. Half apologetically the majority report asks us to make allowances on the ground of the intricacy of the processes lying between demand and its satisfaction, the vicissitudes of human desires which must be anticipated, and that " in a world where harvest comes but once a year, steady week-in week-out employment, and, what is more, steady week-in week-out wage, is the new thing and the 'unnatural' thing."

Before proceeding to make recommendations both sets of Commissioners examine critically the methods of dealing with unemployment already tried. Both condemn relief works, though the minority, in

disagreement with the majority, hold that the experience of the policy of the Unemployed Workmen Act has proved "full of valuable suggestion and promise." Relief works, the minority report points out, have proved fatally attractive to men of discontinuous occupation, as also to all the under-employed. The Unemployed Workmen Act was, in the words of Mr. Gerald Balfour, intended for the "élite of the unemployed"; it has been used largely by casual labourers and loafers, and decent men willing and wishful to work have even been intimidated and prevented from doing their best. Certainly, after our investigation we agree as to the low character and indifferent records of many of those who apply for occupation under this Act; but, if they are carefully sifted, one would gather from evidence furnished in the report before us that this ought not to militate against the effective working of the Act. Again, the wise provision contained in the Chamberlain circular of 1886, that the wages should be beneath the normal rate has been widely departed from. Now, as a rule, the "market rate" is paid, and this means that much of the unemployed labour is remunerated on a scale higher than that to which it is ever accustomed ordinarily. To get over the difficulty work has been grudgingly given out in doles, by the half week or even half day, which has rendered it most welcome to casual workers. As Sir Hubert Llewellyn Smith wrote in his memorandum of 1896, "Loafers and tramps are not unwilling to do a couple of days' work, even hard work, and many who will work for weeks together three days in each week, would be weeded out if they were compelled to work every day."

According to the minority report, the low wages clause of the Chamberlain circular proved quite unworkable in practice, so that it had to be given up. Jealousy, shirking, and even riots and disturbances, were the consequences of attempts to enforce it. As regards tasks

suitable for the unskilled, " the normal wage for this work was so low that any lower wage would be insufficient for subsistence. But even if there had been no practical objection it would have been politically impracticable to undercut the current rate in the district. The trade unions, and indeed the whole opinion of the working-class, would have vehemently objected to any attempt on the part of the municipal authority to lower the current rate of wages and the standard of life of the wage-earner, by taking advantage of his necessities as an unemployed person. Hence it came to be a matter of course that the current rate for unskilled labour should be paid." No doubt the difficulties were considerable, but municipal authorities could hardly be charged with taking advantage of the " necessities of the unemployed person " when the work done was not sufficiently needed to be undertaken ordinarily, and was carried out at a cost far above its market rate, even when low wages were paid, as is shown elsewhere in the minority report. " We do not wish to ignore the fact that, *taking the workmen as a whole and ignoring many individual cases to the contrary,* the men out of work at any one time are apt to include the less efficient, the less energetic, the less strong, the less young, the less regular, the less temperate, and the less docile of their class; 5 or 10 or 20 per cent. had to go, and these particular men were chosen for discharge rather than other men, for one or other of these reasons, some of which relate to personal conduct, whilst others do not." The payment of the average rate of wages should at least imply the attainment of the average level of efficiency. It would have been astonishing if the costs of works carried out under the system of broken employment, with labour imperfectly sifted and not unusually supervised inadequately, had not been high. In fact they were frequently enormous. Sufficient examples are given in Chapter IX. of our investigation to render unnecessary quotation of other

instances from the report before us; but, as the Commissioners in the majority point out, numerous instances show that the results were much better the more the conditions receded from the eleemosynary. When degree of distress, and not efficiency, is made the chief qualification for receiving work the work is not taken seriously. Again, it could not be argued that the lower rates were physically impossible seeing that for continuous work they yielded weekly sums greater than the out-of-work benefits drawn by most trade unionists. However, in 1895 the low wages clause was omitted from the Local Government Board Circular.

Again, in opposition to relief works, complaint is made of the pressure naturally put upon town councillors when, perhaps, from 35 to 47 per cent. of those applying for work are voters; of the cost of carts, horses and implements; and of the insignificant amount of help afforded. Further, it is alleged that the institution of relief works threw more people out of employment. Of course the relief works might operate in this way, but they could be so arranged as not to do so. We have dealt with the question in Chapter IX. In view of the character which relief works have commonly assumed, it would have been remarkable had the Distress Committees' registers not been avoided by the best workmen, and it would have been equally remarkable had not voluntary contributions fallen off and fallen off seriously.

Coming to recommendations, both majority and minority reports propose first the institution of a network of united Labour Exchanges on a national basis. In the experiments made in the past the defects referred to in our Chapter X. are noted, and the causes of the success of the German exchanges are carefully set forth. The Commissioners see no reason why the successful features of the German exchanges should not be reproduced in England if the scheme of exchanges is

started on proper lines. As to what these lines should be there is no disagreement, and we need not therefore repeat material already contained in our chapter on the subject. It is pointed out that the trade unions may expect to save on unemployed and travelling benefit; and, in addition to the advantages which lie more on the surface, it is suggested that labour exchanges would make it easier for men permanently displaced by industrial changes to pass to new occupations, facilitate the use of subsidiary trades by seasonal workers, substitute for artificial tests and inquiries in cases of distress the natural test of a situation offered through the exchange, and aid the suppression of vagrancy which is now encouraged by the need of personal searching for work.

Turning their attention to the evil of intermittent work, the majority of the Commission very properly lay it down at the outset that the aim must be first to diminish the sources from which the intermittent labourer is recruited, and, secondly, to decrease and contract the existing practice of intermittent employment. The first aim draws attention at once to boy labour, and the majority Commissioners declare that they regard with favour the following suggestions:—that boys should be kept at school until the age of fifteen instead of fourteen; that exemption below this age should only be granted for boys leaving to learn a skilled trade; and that there should be school supervision till sixteen and replacement in school of boys not properly employed. They also affirm their recognition of the urgent need for improved facilities for technical instruction and, without recommending, point out the value of extended continuation work of the right kind, incidentally emphasising that the present education is too literary and diffuse in its character, and should be more practical. Some of the Commission look with favour on compulsory military training as the simplest and most effective method of

improving the physique and *moral* of the rising generation. The minority is more drastic in its proposals, and would not be satisfied with less than a raising of the age limit and an enactment that no person under 18 should work more than 30 hours a week, the time off being devoted to suitable continuation instruction.

Looking to the other means of doing away with intermittent labour, namely the regularising of the forms in which work is offered, all the Commission recognise the gain which would accrue from employers' spreading their work more evenly, though they do not enter into the economics of such an arrangement, for points connected with which we refer our readers to Chapter III. following. "With regard to private employers it may doubtless be urged," says the majority report, "that a large reserve of labour is really essential to them . . . that if they have not such large reserves available it will be impossible for them in the face of competition to accept new contracts suddenly advertised; that such contracts will go elsewhere—possibly abroad—and will carry with them, as is too often the case, other orders. The result would be that the general volume of trade undertaken and employment offered by them would decrease." No doubt it would be a convenience to create extra supplies of labour at will, if it could be created to exist only temporarily, but the case is quite otherwise when the labour would be there permanently. It would not pay employers to leave some labour which could be engaged at a profit unemployed—apart from the effect upon wages of the competition of the 'outs' with those in work—and, even if it would, employers could not make a profit in this way without a national conspiracy against labour. But, perhaps, we are reading more than is intended into this paragraph. All will certainly approve the suggestion that "the Board of Trade should send officers to visit

localities where intermittent employment prevails, and should endeavour, through conference with employers and employed, to arrange for some schemes by which the industry may be to a greater extent regularised." The majority report expresses doubt of the practicability of the recommendation—which is made in the minority report—that employers should be forced to get casual labour from the Labour Exchange, and notices, without approving, the proposal to introduce "employment termination dues" with the object of making intermittent employment more costly. Such dues would operate as a tax on unemployment, and a tax on unemployment would at first strike one as an excellent device for stopping it, but a tax on dismissal would be anticipated at the time of engagement and would thus become a tax on employment. To point this out is of course not to condemn the scheme, which by discouraging one form of employment would encourage another, though not as a rule to the same extent.

For the suppression of intermittent employment both reports depend upon labour exchanges—the use of which would in some cases be made compulsory by the Commissioners in the minority—and training establishments, rural and otherwise. The minority Commissioners further recommend certain measures designed to check undesirable reactions upon the working of these schemes. We quote the passage in full lest we should misinterpret. "We think that the 'Decasualization of the Casual Labourer' and the suppression of Under-employment cannot be undertaken, without simultaneously providing, in some way or other, for the men who would be thrown out. We have shown that there exists in the United Kingdom to-day no inconsiderable surplus of labour—not, indeed, of workmen who could not, with an improved organisation of industry, be productively employed; but of workmen who are as a matter of fact now chronically

under-employed, and of whose potential working time a large part is, to their own mental and physical hurt, and to our great loss, at present wholly wasted. By the working of a National Labour Exchange such as we have proposed, and by the deliberate draining of the stagnant pools of labour into a common reservoir, we contemplate that a rapidly increasing number of these under-employed men will find themselves employed with practical continuity, whilst there will be a corresponding section left without any employment at all. For the surplus of labour power which already exists in the partial idleness of huge reserves of under-employed men, and which will then for the first time stand revealed and identified in the complete idleness of a smaller number of wholly displaced individuals, we want to ensure that the National Labour Exchange shall be able to find appropriate employment at wages. It so happens that there are three social reforms of great importance which would promote this object, and which, accordingly, we recommend for adoption concurrently with any attempt to drain the morass of Under-employment."

The three reforms meant are :—(1) Raising the age limit and enacting that no person under 18 shall work more than 30 hours a week, the time off being devoted to suitable continuation education; (2) the reduction of the hours of labour of railway and tramway servants; (3) the withdrawal from industrial wage-earning of the mothers of young children. The absolute value of reforms somewhat of the kind indicated nobody would question, but, as side issues, we do not propose to discuss them here. Side issues are best avoided if agreement is to be reached on the urgent problem of unemployment. What we have to suggest is that the reason advanced in the minority report for these reforms is not sufficient. We do not imagine that the authors of this report would hold that society as at present organised would be quite

incapable of absorbing the liberated labour, given adequate time. Such labour would, of course, ultimately be employed in making the goods which are wanted now but cannot be got because there is no labour available to produce them. What the writers of this passage probably have in mind is that a sudden stoppage of the waste involved in casual labour and under-employment would mean *for a time* the complete unemployment of large numbers. No doubt it would, and steps would then have to be taken to deal with the awkward temporary dislocation of demand in relation to the living productive agents; but there is little hope of a sudden stoppage of this waste. As it is stopped industries will progressively absorb the labour set free.

Insurance is placed by the majority Commissioners in the first rank of remedies for distress due to unemployment. They recognise that the risks of unemployment vary from trade to trade, and therefore approve "trade-group insurance" as opposed to "general insurance." It is pointed out that all insurance rests on the principle of the fortunate paying for the unfortunate; but the awkward feature in insurance against unemployment is that the misfortune tends to fall with a regularity, highly discouraging to insurance enterprise, upon those nearest the bottom rung of efficiency. The minority Commissioners gravely question the insurability of the risk among such as constitute the bulk of the unemployed during times of business slackness; the difficulties surrounding insurance against unemployment we have fully examined in Chapter VIII. The majority report, after pointing out that the trade unions providing unemployed benefits have grown faster than the others since 1892, and after noticing that Friendly Societies have barely touched this kind of insurance, holds that the establishment and promotion of Unemployment Insurance, especially among the unskilled and unorganised labour, is of paramount import-

ance; that contributions might be made from public funds towards its furtherance; and that this form of insurance can best be promoted by utilising the agency of existing trade organisations, or of organisations of a similar character which may be brought into existence. Finally it recommends that a small committee of experts be instructed to frame as quickly as possible a scheme or schemes for consideration. After German experiments with forms of social insurance, we naturally inquire whether some share of the cost of the insurance might not be thrown upon employers by means of a tax varying, say, with the wages-bill. One advantage, were the contributions reckoned on a trade-group basis, would be the inducement afforded each industry to arrange for the extended adoption of some one of the forms of absorption of the unemployed described in our Chapter III. But very great difficulties of administration would be entailed, and with such a system of contributions from employers it would be practically essential to combine compulsory membership of employees. As nothing of the kind has been suggested, and as Continental experiments with compulsory insurance have been unsuccessful and the minority report specifically rejects compulsory insurance, we can only conclude that a scheme inclusive of employers would probably prove unworkable. The Commissioners in the minority, while approving insurance against unemployment, are less hopeful than the majority Commissioners that any revolution will result from encouraging it.

With special reference to trade cycles the majority report recommends that public authorities be enjoined to endeavour, as far as possible, to undertake their irregular work when the general demand for labour is slack. The minority makes substantially the same suggestion, framed on a more comprehensive design, in proposing that all public authorities, not excepting

departments of the Government, should draw up schedules of work with a view to retaining as much as possible for the lean years of trade depression, projects of afforestation, coast protection, and land reclamation being included.

It is clear that reforms somewhat on the lines sketched would effect much. We have now to inquire into the fate of any of those in distress for want of work who would be left out, and to learn what is to be done with persons who refuse to work regularly or even at all.

The last would be committed to detention colonies by both sections of the Royal Commission, but while the majority think these detention colonies should be penal and placed under the Home Office, the minority would relegate their management to a national department headed by a Minister of Labour. Administrative differences between the two reports we wish to avoid debating as much as possible, and obviously here the divergence in recommendation relates to machinery and not to the method of treatment. With the general proposals as regards detention colonies we find ourselves in unreserved accord. The committal of persons of the class now under consideration to such institutions for periods varying from six months to three years would be far superior to the present system of disregard tempered with occasional resort to very short terms of imprisonment. Imprisonment does more harm than good; and there is some prospect that enforced regular work under healthy conditions may effect reform in not a few cases. Emigration is recommended for such persons as have met with failure in this country and are likely to make a fresh start under new conditions, and in connection with emigration it is pointed out that farm colonies might be of distinct service. We may note here, to escape any chance of misapprehension, that the labour colonies referred to in both schemes would be of many types, graded to admit of three or

four different systems of treatment, and that all would not be detention colonies.

So far so good, but there is now the treatment of the remainder to be considered. The majority Commissioners divide the necessitous unemployed into three groups and their classification the minority Commissioners would accept, we feel sure. These groups are (1) those who require temporary maintenance with work, (2) those who require for a longer period maintenance with work and training, and (3) those who require detention and discipline. Classification, it is believed, can easily be made through the industrial records accumulated in the Labour Exchanges. The question now is, what is to be done with class (1) in so far as room is not made for all of its members at any time by the measures already described? The majority report suggests that they should be given home assistance, partial home assistance, or institutional assistance, according as each was most likely to prove appropriate, accompanied by daily work in an Industrial or Agricultural Institution, or Colony, or otherwise as the Public Assistance Authority might determine, within regulations laid down by the Local Government Board. By Home Assistance is meant assistance at the home whether in money or kind, and given without requiring the recipient to live entirely in an institution. Among the conditions under which Home Assistance is recommended are, that the requisite help be not forthcoming from any other source, and that the applicant has a decent home and a good industrial record. In connection with home assistance the majority report lays it down that it should in some way or other be less agreeable than the unemployed benefit received through insurance, lest otherwise people should be dissuaded from insuring against unemployment. Partial Home Assistance means aid for the family, the applicant himself being maintained in an institution and

given work. Institutional assistance means continuous maintenance of the applicant and his family in an Industrial or Agricultural Institution, or Colony, without detention unless the applicant binds himself to stay for a definite period. It is suggested that the work associated with home, partial home, or institutional assistance might be carried on mainly in one institution for each County Borough, containing inexpensive workshops for industrial occupations and land for outdoor work. In addition there would be the Labour Colonies already mentioned. At an early stage the respectable unemployed would be dissociated from the habitual "in and out," and the Agricultural and Industrial Institution would, of course, be worked in close touch with labour exchanges. The work of each person would be adapted as nearly as possible to his previous calling, and as regards political disqualification on account of public assistance it is recommended that "only persons who have received assistance, other than medical relief, for not less than three months in the aggregate in the qualifying year be disfranchised."

This public assistance is to be under the direction of local Public Assistance Authorities acting in collaboration with Voluntary Aid Councils representing Charities, Charitable Trusts and philanthropy, and each containing some members of the Public Assistance Authority for the same area. A Public Assistance Authority would consist in part of members of the County or County Borough Council and in part of other persons (appointed by these bodies) who are presumed to have special knowledge of the administration of relief. This body is to work through Public Assistance Committees, which in the same way will be partly constituted of members of Urban or District Councils and partly of voluntary social workers. Coterminous with the Public Assistance Committees there would be Voluntary Aid Committees constituted similarly to the Voluntary Aid Councils.

The idea underlying this scheme of duplicate authorities, the one set representative of the public, so to speak, and the other of charities, charitable trusts and philanthropy, is to prevent overlapping in the dispensation of help and to bring all agencies for aiding the unfortunate into co-operating relationship. The new machinery which it is proposed to set up will only come into the fringe of our discussion, which is concerned mainly with those more or less efficient working-people who are from time to time discarded from the productive enterprises of the country merely because trade is slack, but it was necessary to say a few words about it to make the proposals of the majority comprehensible.

Even those who dissent most from the findings of the Commissioners in the majority will feel admiration for their grasp of a most complicated problem, and for the systematisation whereby all its manifold sections and the agencies for their solution are drawn together in effective correlation. And we must just notice—irrelevant as the notice is to our present confined inquiry—the wise disregard in these proposals of the prejudice which makes a fetish of representation by popular election and rejects all those other forms of representation implied in a perfect democracy. A similar disregard of certain democratic superstitions is exhibited by the minority in their proposal to create Registrars of Public Assistance with wide powers and to place them in positions in which they would be largely independent of popular control.

We must now set side by side for comparison with the recommendations of the majority the alternative proposals of the minority Commissioners, in which we find, as we expected, a spirited protest against the disposition of society to subject itself to the things that be. They argue that cases of unemployment are beyond the power of local authorities to deal with, and they therefore suggest, as we have observed, a department of

labour with a Minister of Labour. Some of the measures advocated by the minority Commissioners have already been described, and we have now to ask what would be done with any unemployed left over. The answer is as follows:—

"That for the ultimate residuum of men in distress from want of employment, who may be expected to remain, after the measures now recommended have been put in operation, we recommend that maintenance should be freely provided without disfranchisement, on condition that they submit themselves to the physical and mental training that they may prove to require. That it should be the function of the Maintenance and Training Division of the Ministry of Labour to establish and maintain Receiving Offices in the various centres of population, at which able-bodied men in distress could apply for assistance, and at which they would be medically examined and have their faculties tested in order to discover in what way they could be improved by training. They would then be assigned either to suitable Day Training Depôts or residential Farm Colonies, where their whole working time would be absorbed in such varied beneficial training of body and mind as they proved capable of; their wives and families being, meanwhile, provided with Home Aliment. . . . . That for able-bodied women, without husband or dependent children, who may be found in distress from want of employment, there should be exactly the same sort of provision as for men. That for widows or other mothers in distress, having the care of young children, residing in homes not below the National Minimum of sanitation, and being themselves not adjudged unworthy to have children entrusted to them, there should be granted adequate Home Aliment on condition of their devoting their whole time and energy to the care of the children. That for the childless wives of able-bodied men in attendance at a Train-

ing Establishment, adequate Home Aliment be granted, conditional on their devoting their time to such further training in Domestic Economy as may be prescribed for them. . . .

" . . . That upon the establishment of the Ministry of Labour, and the setting to work of its new organisation, the Unemployed Workmen Act of 1905 should cease to apply; and the Local Authorities should be relieved of all responsibilities with regard to the able-bodied and the unemployed." The rest of what has been hitherto described as Poor Relief would be distributed according to its kinds among Committees of the County Councils and County Borough Councils, which might need to be strengthened in consequence. Unity would be brought into the scheme of assistance through the agency of an official in each area to be known as the Registrar of Public Assistance. This we just mention to round off our exposition, though our sole interest in this essay is in the problem of the unemployed.

We feel some doubt whether either of these schemes of assistance for any employed left over, after the measures which we have approved are carried out, will quite meet the existing situation.

To our mind any satisfactory system of remedies for unemployment must proceed from a recognition of the fundamental distinctions between (*a*) those unemployed on account of the operation of external economic forces productive of lengthy unemployment, (*b*) those unemployed in consequence of the normal economic changes taking place in a community, and (*c*) those out of work for faults of their own. Class (*c*) presents no difficulty. Individuals in class (*b*) though out of work for no fault of their own, if in distress, will probably be in distress through faults of their own in the spending of income. A certain amount of providence must be expected in the

community; persons ought not to be so helpless as to be reduced to destitution by the smaller accidents of life. But the members of class (*a*) are in a very peculiar position. Concerning them we must not argue as if there were no trade cycles, or as if trade cycles were their fault or did little harm. Trade cycles are periodic economic cyclones which may be of terrific violence and sometimes the anti-cyclone is long delayed. Insurance against the unemployment caused by these business cyclones is not widely extended—though it is pointed out that since 1892 the Unions providing unemployed benefit have grown the fastest—and is frequently inadequate. The majority Commissioners are anxious that people should be self-supporting and responsible for their own lives, and they naturally look to insurance to meet the troubles caused by these periodic disturbances. But even they find it necessary, with the minority, to propose assisting people to be independent: the State is to be asked to contribute to the cost of insurance.

As regards the insurance side of the proposals we cannot feel confident about their success. No doubt more of the skilled and well-paid will be induced to insure; but this is not the class in respect of which the problem is greatest to-day. The unskilled remain. The bulk of the unemployed in trade depressions are unskilled; they are the poorest and, broadly speaking, the least provident members of the community; and it is the very poorest of this poorest class, and the most improvident of this improvident class, who are thrown out of work first and taken back last. Will they insure in large numbers? If not, are they, for all their improvidence, to be ranked with other necessitous persons, and so probably made of that class, to which many of them do not belong as yet? Is it not a large thing to demand that these people as a body should provide against the accident of lengthy unemployment in times of trade depression? Their wages being so low, they

trust to luck—they may get through the bad trade somehow without losing quite all their work.

Again, suppose that they all insured, should we be any the better off? Remember what they are—not loafers, but, generally speaking, the most inefficient, dilatory, careless, and unmanageable of the industrial army. Of course, employers discriminate in dismissing hands as much as master mariners when they must jettison parts of their cargoes. These men would draw their benefits so long as depression lasted, and their benefits received in idleness would be their undoing. What they need, if they are not to slip down a rung of the industrial ladder, is work; and nothing is to be gained from giving them that work with a sort of intangible disapproval.

After carefully studying the majority report we are not clear that the Public Assistance Authorities are intended to find for these people the right kind of work in the right way, according to our views. It seems to be implied in both the majority and minority recommendations that such of these people as are not absorbed by the machinery set going for increasing the demand for labour in bad times, and are not insured, will be 'trained' or 'cured' in some way, though they do not properly belong to the class which specifically calls for training or cure. Of what kind is the work provided in the institutions to be? The bulk of these men want only rough work. Farm work is unsuitable because the numbers to be found tasks will be large. And the work *must be* real work of appreciable value—upon this point too insistent an emphasis cannot be laid. For such work one naturally looks to road-making, levelling, laying out parks, making lakes and boulevards, clearing sewers, adapting open spaces to recreative purposes; but the majority Commissioners seem afraid of invoking the co-operation of local authorities. Their fear is not unreasonable; relief works have been badly managed in the past, and the wearing

pressure of the organised unemployed voter is a serious matter to be reckoned with. But labour exchanges have been equally badly managed and they are still recommended. Labour Colonies shew an almost unbroken record of failure and mismanagement, still they are recommended. We feel sure that too much stress must not be laid on the fact that the waste and folly associated with relief works have in the past been exposed with monotonous regularity. Apart from afforestation, which is still to be tried and which will hardly solve more than a fraction of the problem in the case of urban dwellers, we can think of no other work than that indicated above *which will be of use* and can be furnished in bulk. Whether it should be under the control of local authorities, private contractors, or public assistance committees, is a matter to which we are at this stage comparatively indifferent; but that the work should be given only to employable men out of work for the reasons defined, and be kept out of touch with the other activities under the direction of public assistance authorities, we feel no manner of doubt. And the wage must be low, the supervision effective, and the employment continuous.

It is significant reading in the majority report that these people if helped by the Public Assistance Authority will receive ' Home Assistance,' *not wages,* and that among the conditions of their getting this are that the requisite assistance be not forthcoming from any other source and that they should have a ' decent home.'

The minority Commissioners seem to us to be in similar straits. They, too, repudiate semi-uncommercial work of some public utility, but they give no hint of what will be provided in its place. Relief works they condemn, for one reason because they throw more people out of work—a reason which is not valid, as we have demonstrated in Chapter IX., if the works are of a certain kind—but they do not shew how the work provided through the Labour Department will obviate this objection.

It is no good magnifying difficulties. How, it is asked, can work for wages be unobjectionably found for all trades? The fact is, as we have already urged, that an overwhelming proportion of the unemployed in distress are general labourers, or persons capable of performing rough tasks. The skilled man is frequently kept on with diminished work to beat time because his permanent loss is to be avoided; but the unskilled man is easily replaced without loss. No doubt the rough work could be supplemented with some other connected with public utilities—painting, brickwork, work with wood—if it were demanded, but for the highly skilled we recognise that little can be done. The State cannot make suitable work for unemployed solicitors or doctors. But rough work, and some amount of semi-skilled supplementary work, at a subsistence wage could at any rate be found for any who cared to take it. And as regards the skilled, the subsidising of their out-of-work benefits is recommended.

The lines of criticism in this essay will not surprise all who signed the majority Report. Evidently their recommendations were not put forward without misgivings on the part of some, which suggested the need of the transitional measures suggested, Mrs. Bosanquet, Dr. Downes, Miss Octavia Hill, and Dr. Loch protesting. It is pointed out that the new system would take time to become effective; that the methods of preventing distress would not work their results rapidly; and that before the stationary state was approximately reached prolonged and acute distress might occur. "It seems, therefore, necessary," they conclude, "for the success of the reforms we propose that, during the early years of their existence, they should be, for a strictly limited period, safeguarded by some kind of reserve power or safety valve, available only under exceptional circumstances."

The safety valve is to consist in the power to institute local works of a semi-unremunerative character under

contractors at the market rate of wages. These are called "commercial" works. They are to be under the direction of the Work Committees of local authorities. Financing is to be arranged by loans through the Public Works Loan Board at rates of interest at which the Government can borrow. Applications for such loans are not to be entertained without reports from the Voluntary Aid Committees and Public Assistance Authorities justifying the applications. It is intended that schemes should be drawn up beforehand by local authorities so that they may not be taken by surprise; and attention is called to the successful provision of public works for meeting distress under the Indian Government.

It looks to us as if transitional measures on these lines would have to be continued throughout most of the passage of society from its present infirmities to the ideal. Over points of detail we are not disposed to quarrel. Our views as regards wages we have already expressed and we see no reason to alter them after what we have learnt of the average efficiency to be expected from labour so employed and of the average value of the work which would be undertaken. The payment of the market rate of wages in our opinion would mean the re-creation of the abuses which followed upon the departure from the policy of the Chamberlain circular of 1886, or it would mean a far greater curtailment of the amount of employment offered than we are able to contemplate without disquiet. The distribution of cost again is a matter which we must leave over, except to say that some control by the Central Authority, made effective by a monetary connection, would be a valuable safeguard against certain dangers; and that the principle of valuing the work done and charging only its market value to the rates, other than the public assistance rate, should operate, through the public criticism thereby evoked, as an automatic check on waste which could not be wisely dispensed with.

Unemployment:

With Special Reference to Lancashire

CHAPTER I.

Nature and Bearing of the Investigation.

If we have done our work properly the following pages should be of some value to all in Lancashire who are not indifferent to social questions, and even to a wider public. They are primarily, though not exclusively, addressed to persons within the boundaries of our County. But though the material treated in this volume is drawn mainly from Lancastrian sources, it does not follow that its conclusions are applicable only to our immediate neighbourhood. English human nature is pretty much the same throughout England. The effects which succeed certain causes in Lancashire may be expected to succeed the same causes in the England outside the County Palatine. Nobody would maintain that observation made upon sick Lancastrians in the Manchester Royal Infirmary could rarely lead to discoveries which would hold beyond the confines of our little local world. We do not, of course, intend to argue that local peculiarities are not found in social problems and that methods of solution must not be varied in detail from place to place. If we did, modern geographers would soon be in arms against us. We simply wish to urge that the local investigation may be expected to yield broad conclusions which hold nationally, even to some extent universally. Indeed certain national problems are best attacked by the intensive method, that is by the method of close local inquiry; and we believe that much of the problem of unemployment happens to be of this kind.

Economic problems may be roughly classified into those in which the mechanical element predominates

and those in which the human element predominates. By the mechanical element we understand the system of interactions whereby such economic matters as prices, international values, market rates of interest, and so forth, are determined. Sometimes a problem is found to resolve itself into the reactions of retarding impulses on the mechanical system. And in many of its aspects the problem of the unemployed cannot be grasped without a comprehension of the mechanism of economic functioning. On this side—as we shall call it, its mechanical side—it is found to consist partly in friction which can be reduced, partly in a mal-adjustment between production and spasmodic demand which can be improved, and partly in other detailed arrangements or disarrangements. But when all has been said that can be said of the mechanical side, the problem is not solved in the sense that all causes have been elucidated and all cures defined. The problem in essential constituents is a human one, that is to say, it relates not merely to the mechanical relations of demand and supply but to the qualities of people, the training which makes them what they are, their foresight and providence and adaptability, the reactions of mechanical effects upon human initiative and resilience, the appropriateness of different cures to feeble and to sturdy humanity. A problem of this kind cannot be solved by the mere application of the more abstract principles of economics to statistics. It cannot be adequately represented in statistics. It therefore claims direct intensive study, and it goes without saying that an intensive study cannot be made over the whole area of the country. Nor is it necessary to carry it so far, as we have already explained. Therefore, though local in its direct reference, our investigation bears results which have a national reference.

Our plan is as follows. We attempt first an estimate of the numbers unemployed. These tell merely the

magnitude of the problem, but it is important that its magnitude should be known to social reformers. It will be seen that complete and partial unemployment abound in an overwhelming degree when trade is bad and that when trade generally is good they are far from being wholly non-existent. We next pass on to investigate causes and to suggest antidotes. Causes and remedies, of course, hang together. Only quacks think they can find real cures when causes are obscure. In this part of our work we have tried to avoid controversy and aim straight for our goal. Controversy is apt to lead people into by-paths and divert attention from the practicable end. The practicable end is the prevention of as much unemployment as can be prevented, and the mitigation of the distress occasioned by the rest, under conditions essentially the same as the present, since they cannot be rapidly altered; and some handling of the trouble of unemployment is needed at once. We make no doubt that people of the most divergent views can be brought to agree upon fundamental matters which bear now on practical politics. We can say this with some confidence seeing that though we, the authors, do not see quite eye to eye in social questions, we have experienced no difficulty in agreeing upon our conclusions. The fact that we have each a different bias will be some guarantee that our findings are not determined by predilections and that our suggestions are not coloured by prejudices. Again, we have made every effort to exclude unessential influences. It is really about these that there is most controversy. The land-tenure reformer naturally sees the existing system of land-tenure in the fore-front of the causes; ardent Free Traders, no less than ardent Tariff Reformers, are inclined to lay too much stress on interferences with foreign trade; many temperance advocates deplore the blindness of those who do not begin and end their proposals with condemnation of drink; individualists see mainly the

cases of unemployment resulting from imperfect competition; and not a few socialists think it is no good patching and argue that we had really better start our social organisation afresh. We would not go so far as to say that any of the causes urged by reformers of one idea have had no effect, nor would we argue that their panaceas would be wholly worthless; but the question for us to settle is what are the prime forces and what the comparatively negligible. Of the latter we say nothing; it is not worth while fighting about quantities of the second or third order of magnitude, that is, about the practically negligible.

It will be a convenience to the reader to be furnished with a chart of our survey. We find two problems, the problem of the employables and that of the unemployables. The latter sub-divides itself and the solutions are remedial for the one class of unemployables and deterrent for the other. Further, we find the two fundamental problems overlapping, the magnitude of the first settling the magnitude of the second, and the borderland group of people really falling within both. The problem of the employables again sub-divides into several problems—mainly what may be called the cyclical, the seasonal (of more than one kind), the accidental (connected with industrial changes) and the residual. Coming to remedies we distinguish between those intended to prevent the contraction of work which takes place at certain times, those for the spreading of such work as there is (upon this most important question we direct special attention to Chapter III.), and those for the mitigation of the distress due to the cessation of earning, and for the prevention of the demoralisation due to cessation of work. This is the barest outline, which can be filled in by the reader after a perusal of the Chapters which succeed.

CHAPTER II.

Unemployed Trade Unionists.

Logically Chapter III. ought to precede this Chapter. For in Chapter III. we shall be concerned with the extent of unemployment broadly regarded, that is, regarded as the actual degree of contraction of work, however that contraction may be expressed. Evidently the national output can be reduced in other ways than by having some individuals rendered absolutely idle. Unemployment, meaning complete idleness, is only one of the forms which unemployment in the wide sense assumes. The most logical procedure, therefore, would be to analyse unemployment broadly conceived (*i.e.*, contraction of work) and pass thence to unemployment narrowly conceived (*i.e.*, the numbers deprived of work altogether). However, the logical procedure is not always the best. The natural order of discourse is from the familiar to the unfamiliar. Consequently we start with that which is probably most familiar to all who have been compelled, by what they have heard and seen around them, to think about the question of unemployment—and few have not—that is, the chart of unemployment among trade unionists published monthly in the *Labour Gazette*.

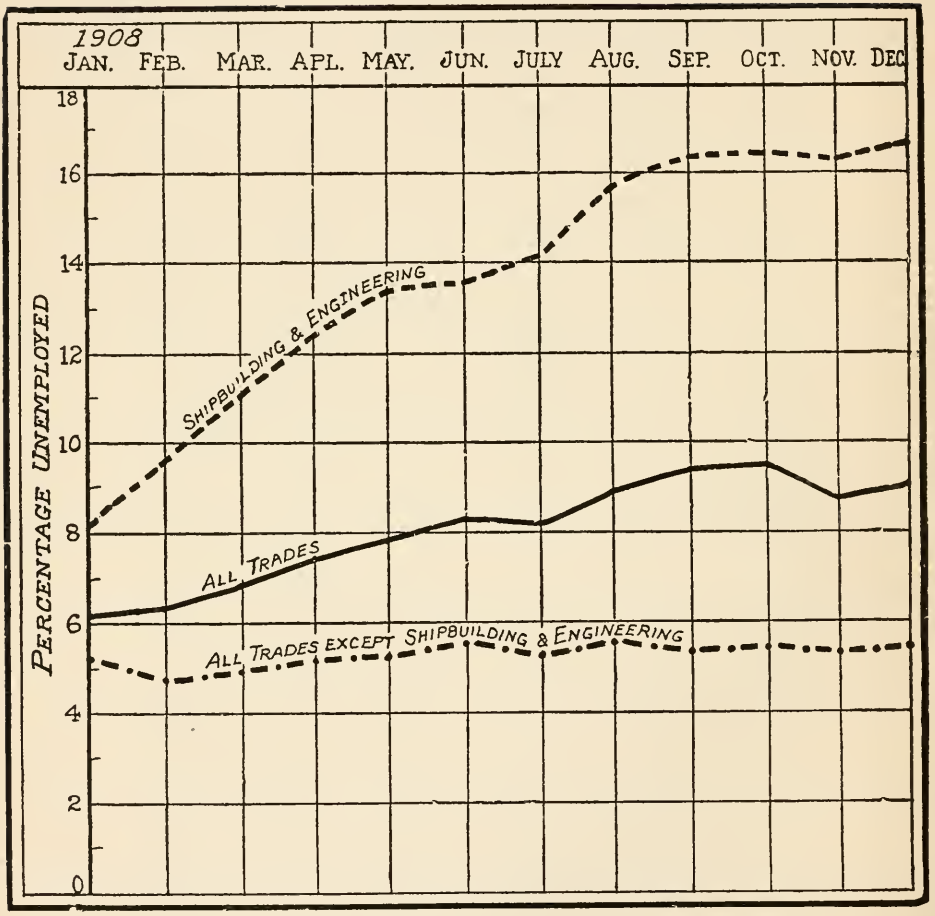
Of the various trade unions of the country, about 250, which include workers in all the important industries and cover nearly one-third of the trade union membership of the country, furnish direct to the Labour Department of the Board of Trade detailed monthly returns. These give the numbers of members who, at

the end of each month, are either receiving out-of-work or travelling benefit, or have received the one or the other for the full period during which they were entitled to it and are still unemployed. From the statistics so furnished, which are used by the Board of Trade for the construction of the chart of unemployment among trade unionists published monthly in the *Labour Gazette*, the sick and superannuated as well as persons locked out or on strike are excluded. Naturally, in view of the basis of the returns, the unions of unskilled labour (the members of which, we shall show reason for believing, are peculiarly subject to unemployment) are barely represented, if at all. Hence the figures must be taken as relating only to skilled and semi-skilled occupations, and not at all exhaustively even to these in view of the inadequate inclusion of the highly seasonal building trades. They are, further, subject to errors arising from the fact that the proportions belonging to different industries of those to whom the returns relate are not necessarily the same as the proportions which hold between the trade union members of the same industries. Metal, engineering, and ship-building businesses are over represented: the members of the trade unions of these industries which make returns to the Board of Trade constitute over 40 per cent. of the persons in respect of whom returns are made at all, whereas the trade unionists members of the same industries probably form less than 20 per cent. of the trade unionists of the country.

Clearly engineering and ship-building are heavily overweighted in the Board of Trade index number of unemployment, and the representation of certain other trades is far from being commensurate with their importance in the national economy. Overweighting is, of course, a matter of little moment in the case of industries whose unemployment experiences are in no sense peculiar. But those of engineering and ship-building are peculiar; they suffer more from unemployment than most other trades.

The reason is that these industries largely provide instruments for production and transport, and that hitherto in times of bad trade employers have preferred, as a rule, to rub along with such fixed capital as they possessed rather than run the risk of extending their plant for a doubtful future. Signs are not wanting, however, that this practice of inactivity as regards renewals and extensions of plant in times of bad trade is being undermined. In the course of our enquiries we have heard of several cases in which the time of quiescence of trade and low prices is being utilised for making alterations in works the carrying out of which interfered with production. We know of more than one firm of machinists now introducing special machine tools, or devoting attention to other manufacturing problems, which in the last few years they were too hurried to face. We know also of works being built the starting of which was deliberately held back until the expected depression swept large sections of Lancashire markets away. All these are signs that business paralysis is not universal, and that the economy of carrying out certain industrial projects in times of bad trade is not altogether overlooked. In so far, of course, as enterprise extends along these lines the trade cycle will be appreciably counteracted.

In the Chart on page 36, relating to 1908, we have separated the returns of the engineering and shipbuilding trade unions from all others, and drawn for comparison the general percentage for all trade unions. Upon the results we shall comment shortly, but first attention must be drawn to yet another defect—only a slight one, fortunately, and practically negligible, no doubt,—in the Board of Trade index number of unemployment. This index number is founded, we have observed, on persons drawing out-of-work or travelling benefit together with those who are still out of work though their trade union benefits have lapsed. The latter are


1908
JAN. FEB. MAR. APL. MAY. JUN. JULY AUG. SEP. OCT. NOV. DEC.
PERCENTAGE UNEMPLOYED
18
16
14
12
10
8
6
4
2
0
SHIPBUILDING & ENGINEERING
ALL TRADES
ALL TRADES EXCEPT SHIPBUILDING & ENGINEERING

known to the trade unions as they are required to sign the out-of-work books periodically in order to indicate that they are still in want of places. If they are serious workmen and are still anxious to continue in the trade, they will not neglect to sign this book at the stated intervals, inasmuch as their trade unions are their registry offices and chief agencies for getting to work again. Some few may grow careless when trade is very bad, or decide to turn to a less unstable means of support, and these will consequently be omitted from the returns of the trade unions. But the error thereby caused cannot be large.

All who have followed the Board of Trade index number in the last few months will have felt a very natural dismay at its steady ascent and the height to which it had attained before Christmas, 1908. An approximation to 10 per cent. is happily rare. The high points registered recently have not been approached for twenty years and more: even in the disastrous year 1886 the 10 per cent. was only just exceeded. It will cause some slight relief to observe the level of the bottom curve in our diagram, and to remember that if this understates the depression outside certain industries subject to peculiar conditions the middle curve certainly exaggerates it, and exaggerates it grossly. However, our analysis, whilst affording relief on the one hand, is calculated, on the other hand, to dissipate this feeling. The top curve in the diagram indicates a state of affairs in the engineering and ship-building industries which might be supposed to have touched the very bottom limit of possible collapse, were it not (as we shall see) that conditions in ship-building taken alone were far worse. The grave temporary depressions in these industries can be explained, it is true, but they cannot be explained away. Fortunately, it is known in the labour organisations concerned that the risks of unemployment are heavy, and benefits are provided, as a rule, on a scale which considerably mitigates the distress which would otherwise

eventuate. Those who suffer most, however, are the less skilled class of workers whose benefits are lowest when they are provided for at all. There are many of these; and in view of their peculiar circumstances the comparatively generous subventions made by the Treasury to distress work at Barrow, which will be referred to later, will be widely approved.

A large part of the explanation of the abnormal collapse of the ship-building industry at the present time, which has caused a degree of trade-union unemployment of over 25 per cent., is to be found in the fact that a Board of Trade order embodying new regulations raising the load-line, which had the effect of increasing the carrying capacity of the mercantile fleet, came into effect on March 20, 1906. Alterations of a similar character have been frequent since the first Plimsoll Act, because unanimity of opinion has been lacking among naval architects as to a method of discovering how deep a ship may be loaded safely. Shipbuilders have of recent years found a method of reducing the net register of a ship by building numerous structures above the true deck level, and the opinion of the Board of Trade now is that such rigid deck structures raise the level of the curve of stability of the whole fabric of the ship and permit of her being more deeply loaded. The immediate effect, of course, is the same as if the mercantile fleet had been suddenly and considerably augmented. Building trades also are largely employed in providing the means of production, but as the unions in these trades, with the exception of carpenters and plumbers, do not generally pay unemployed benefit, no exact numbers of those who are out of work are kept.

It must be remembered that these trade-union returns do not show short-time unemployment, which is the commonest form of unemployment in the Lancashire cotton industry. It is a form to be encouraged, as we

shall argue later, since thereby the adversity associated with business depression is spread over the whole trade. Low wages for the many are certainly better than no wages for the few, if the aggregate loss of wages is no greater in the one case than in the other. It must further be borne in mind in interpreting these trade-union returns that they represent, not the extent of absolutely unavoidable unemployment, but the amount of unemployment at a wage which the trade unions think it reasonable and politic to insist upon. This is not the place either to criticise or defend the policy pursued by the trade unions, but it ought to be pointed out that the maintenance of the standard wage in time of bad trade causes displacement of labour in a degree which might otherwise be avoided. There are, of course, on the other hand, advantages attached to the policy of the standard rate. We say this because we are anxious not to be misunderstood when we emphasise what exactly some of the unemployment among trade unionists means. In every state of trade and in every industry the numbers to whom employment will be offered depend upon the wages which have to be paid. In industries in which wages are paid by the piece, a shrinkage of business brings about an automatic fall in the weekly rate, and thereby the reaction of the depression in dismissal of hands is to some extent avoided. That arguments can be adduced in favour of elastic piece-rates as well as elastic time-rates cannot be denied. It is not extravagant to suppose that in numerous industries arrangements could be made without great difficulty for the absorption by such industries of their own unemployed, so to speak, that is to say, for the spread of slackness in production over all the employees by a system of short time for each, and some encouragement would certainly be afforded to the plan by the concession of lower piece-rates of pay, or time-rates less than proportional to the reduction of work. We throw out this idea merely as theoretical,

fully realising that the practical problem of the settlement of wages is not so easy as it can be made to appear on paper, and readily admitting that in times of bad trade a somewhat lower wage might not increase employment to any considerable extent. We know, too, the great practical difficulties surrounding schemes for elastic wages. But, to anticipate, we see no way of escape for this generation from recurrent periods of distress unless the cyclical movement of trade, which is one of the worst defects in modern conditions, can be retarded. Elastic wages—that is, wages which rise and fall rapidly in response to the state of trade—would retard it by raising the cost of production as the volume of business expanded; and they would have, as we have suggested, a further—but we think less appreciable—effect in spreading such unemployment as could not be avoided over the whole field of labour. Unfortunately, however, over-trading abroad would not be much reduced by elastic wages in this country.

As regards these points we must insist that we write with hesitancy and from the purely theoretical position. It is for those actually engaged in industry to consider the application of theory to practice. We must not be interpreted as making recommendations upon these points. However, we ought to add that a fallacy frequently creeps into the argument that nothing is gained from cheap production in times of bad trade because the market in the future is spoilt by the sales in the present at low prices. The world cannot be rendered the wealthier by any person's deliberately abstaining from producing something worth having. The truth of this statement is practically conceded in the public disapproval of all attempts to limit output. Individual trades might conceivably benefit, and even countries because of the existence of foreign trade; but it is important that the community should realise that cessation of production always means loss somewhere,

which may not be seen, greater than the gain which is seen.

We now pass on to shew the conditions of employment in the several industries of the country, so far as they are discoverable, conditions in Lancashire being separately stated wherever possible. These conditions have naturally varied from month to month, but only confusion would be produced if we attempted to trace such variations for several industries. Consequently, having shewn, in the earlier part of this chapter, the course of employment regarded as a whole throughout 1908, we shall now cut a section, so to speak, through certain industries at one particular time, with the object of revealing their states of business vitality in relation to each other. We have selected as the most suitable date for our purpose the end of November, 1908, because by this time depression was complete, while the dislocation caused by the cotton strike was over and the special disturbances associated with holidays and the frost and snow had not yet begun to operate. In the first table that follows sections for earlier years are given also for purposes of comparison, together with the latest figures obtainable at the time we write.

These figures may be supplemented by information relating to Lancashire kindly supplied to us direct by certain trade unions of engineers and shipbuilders. The percentages of unemployment at the end of November returned to us were 5·7 for machine makers, 9 for engineers, and 10 for steam-engine makers. Evidently, if these figures are typical of the whole of the unions mentioned, Lancashire is no worse off, and probably a little better off, than the rest of the country. In shipbuilding the Mersey yards are suffering less than the average, but the returns given cover only 4,000 hands. Possibly for the whole of Lancashire the discrepancy would be less.

Trade.	Numbers to whom returns relate in November, 1908.	Percentage of Unemployment at the end of November. 1908.	1907.	1906.	1905.	1904.	Numbers to whom returns relate at end of January, 1909.	Percentage of Unemployment at the end of January. 1909.	1908.	1907.	1906.	1905.	1904.
Engineering :—													
Manchester and Liverpool Districts	19,000	12·4	4·4	2·7	3·1	9·3	18,500	12·8	4·5	2·8	3·1	8·1	7·0
Oldham, Bolton and Blackburn Districts	13,000	13·9	3·3	2·0	3·3	12,1	13,500	15·6	4·2	2·4	3·5	11·8	11·0
United Kingdom	155,000	13·0	4·7	3.5	3·6	7·8	163,000	13·1	5·8	3·2	3·2	6·9	6·7
Ship Building :—													
Mersey	4,000	20·7	5·0	23·3	23·2	17·1	4,000	12·3	7·3	2·1	5·3	10·8	12·4
United Kingdom	59,000	25·2	12·8	13·6	11·8	16·6	56,600	23·0	15·1	8·8	7·9	12·4	14·4
Leather Trade (other than Boot and Shoe) :—													
United Kingdom	3,400	8·2	5·8	5·3	6·8	11·2	3,300	7·9	6·9	6·9	6·4	10·8	9·4
Hat :—													
United Kingdom — Felt	*a*	4·7	(Dispute in progress.)	5·1	7·2	2·3	*a*	3·5	3·2	5 0	7·5	4·3	5·1
United Kingdom — Silk	*a*	18·1	16·0	10·2	15·4	13·4	*a*	16·2	17·5	12·7	14·4	15·6	13·4
Paper :—													
United Kingdom — Machine made	1,600	3·2	1·7	2·1	2·8	1·8	1,600	3·4	1·6	1·9	2·2	2·1	*a*
United Kingdom — Hand made	600	5·8	5·8	4·2	5·7	6·8	*a*	*a*	*a*	5·4	5·7	6·7	*a*
Printing :—													
United Kingdom — Letterpress	41,000 (1906)	*a*	*a*	3·1	3·0	3·1	41,000 (1907)	*a*	*a*	4·2	5·1	5·2	4·3
United Kingdom — Lithographic	6,600 (1906)	*a*	*a*	4·3	4·1	4·8	6,600 (1907)	*a*	*a*	4·7	5·0	6·3	4·6
All (Lancashire and Cheshire)	7,000	4·4	4.2	3·9	5·2	4·7	7,000	6·7	4·0	4·5	5·2	6·4	6·5
,, (United Kingdom)	49,000	4·2	3.3	3·3	3.2	3·4	50,000	6·3	5·0	4·3	5·1	5·3	4·2
Book Binding :—													
United Kingdom	7,090	4·4	2·7	2·2	2·5	3·5	7,000	6·6	4·3	3·9	4·1	4·8	3·1
Building :—													
Carpenters and Joiners — Lancashire & Cheshire	10,000 (1908)	*a*	*a*	*a*	6·4	9·7	10,500 (1905)	*a*	*a*	*a*	*a*	11·6	7·8
Carpenters and Joiners — United Kingdom	54,000 (1905)	11·6	8·2	6·9	8·3	10·1	56,000 (1905)	16·3	12·3	8·2	10·1	11·6	7·7
Plumbers — Lancashire and Cheshire	2,500 (1905)	*a*	*a*	*a*	9·0	9·1	2,500 (1905)	*a*	*a*	*a*	*a*	9·9	10·4
Plumbers — United Kingdom	10,500 (1905)	12·0	8·9	6·9	11·1	10·5	11,500 (1908)	10·3	9·0	6·7	12·1	11·5	9·3
Furnishing and Wood Working :—													
Furnishing	14,000 (1905)	13·0	8·0	5·8	7·0	10·0	13,400 (1906)	13·9	14·5	8·5	10·9	13·5	11·0
Sawyers & Wood Working Machinists	4,700 (1905)	9·7	6·4	5·4	4·5	6·9	4,400 (1906)	9·0	6.1	6·4	5·2	6·6	5·3
Coach Builders	8,300 (1905)	10·9	7·1	4·1	4·4	6·9	8,400 (1906)	9·0	8·3	4·6	5·1	6·7	7·3
Brush Makers	1,700 (1905)	6·6	2·8	4·9	4·0	8·0	1,700 (1906)	6·4	4·2	5·1	4·7	6·6	8·4
All Branches (United Kingdom)	35,000	10·3	6·4	4·8	5·4	7·8	36,000	10·4	9·4	6·4	7·3	9·5	8·8

a Information not accessible.

We have also received from trade unions the following additional facts concerning certain districts of Lancashire:—

	Percentage of Unemployment at end of Nov.
Spinners and piecers	2·3
Beamers, twisters, and drawers ...	15·0
Bleachers, dyers, and finishers ...	4·0
Coachmakers	10·0
Ironfounders	19·1
Ditto for United Kingdom	15·2
Labourers	35·0

	Percentage of members who have been unemployed at some time during period stated	
Blast furnace men	24·6	during November.
Pattern makers	18·9	,, ,,
Carpenters and joiners ...	11·1	,, ,,
Steel smelters and mill and tinplate workers	20·0	,, 1907.

Some of these figures are not calculated on the basis of unemployment benefit paid, and some are estimates. All must not be read, therefore, as exact records. As regards the high return for labourers, the difficulty of arriving at an approximately correct figure when unemployment benefit is not paid must be borne in mind, as we have been officially warned, and no doubt at the best of times the work of a number of those now reckoned as out of work entirely is only casual. It must be noted, further, that the percentages of unemployment for the last day of November would of course be less than the percentages shown in the second table. On the evidence of these tables it cannot be established that complete unemployment is worse or better in Lancashire than elsewhere. It is stated to be worse in Lancashire in the case of the ironfounders, but the Union of Carpenters

and Joiners reports that Lancashire is one of the least affected counties. However, members of the latter union have, of course, suffered severely where they are working in collaboration with shipbuilders. Thus one branch of the carpenters and joiners in a ship-building centre returns 60 unemployed at the end of last November out of a membership of 204. Almost half of these had been out of work for 20 weeks or more. On the whole, in view of the large numbers of cotton operatives in Lancashire and of the admitted fact that the percentage of complete unemployment among them (at any rate among adult males) is low, we should incline to the view that the percentage of complete unemployment among trade unionists is probably less in Lancashire than elsewhere.

The census taken by the Manchester City Council on March 3rd, 1909, shewed that 2,213 trade unionists in Manchester were out of work on that date. This number seems relatively small, but it must be remembered that Manchester is not primarily a manufacturing place.

It is impossible to frame a scientific estimate of the number of male trade unionists unemployed in Lancashire owing to lack of local statistics of trade unionism, but on a rough computation, allowance being made for the greater severity of unemployment in ship-building and engineering, the figure would seem to lie in the neighbourhood of 22,000, but a good 20 per cent. margin of error at least must be admitted.

CHAPTER III.

Extent of Unemployment and Short Time.

In our last chapter we have referred more than once to the possibilities of spreading unemployment over the whole field of labour, so that, instead of bad trade meaning, say, six per cent. of the industrial population unemployed, it would mean all employed, but each person doing on an average about six per cent. less work. The average reduction of the work of each might be rendered less than six per cent. by the concession of a somewhat lower rate of wages. Such a concession might not involve any diminution of aggregate real wages, and even if it did, were it accompanied by rates of pay higher than they would have been otherwise in times of very good trade, the loss could be more than recovered. We warn the reader again that we are treading here upon exceedingly treacherous ground when regarded from the point of view of practical possibilities.

The contraction of the work of each employee could be brought about (*a*) by a temporary shortening of the working-day or week, or (*b*) by internal arrangements (which might be highly complicated) within each business limiting the work of each individual employed, the average weekly time of running of works being as before. It must not be supposed that these two methods of spreading employment mean exactly the same thing to the employer. The employer has got his machinery and buildings whether he uses them or not. That is to say, he cannot save on capital cost as he can on labour

cost: he cannot economise by dismissing capital as he can by dismissing labour. It will, therefore, be to the employer's interest to try to distribute labour more sparsely, so to speak, over his machinery, using all factors in production which he cannot without loss dispense with and being sparing of the remainder. In many industries the employer cannot easily act in such a manner, and in many others the obstacles in the way would be immense if not insuperable. Our task, however, is to notice all theoretical possibilities. Let us now sum up the situation. The kernel of the problem is contraction of demand. This can be met,

I. By dismissal of labour.

II. By reduction of the working-time of the business.

III. By reduction of the working-time of each workman, the working-time of the business remaining as before.

Frequently we find all three methods commingled. The first is the worst for labour. The third is the ideal where it is possible, for all the fixed plant is kept active. Where practicable it should be best for the employer. There appears to be no good reason why in some businesses it should not be made worth the employer's while to try it, or why some employers and labour organisations should not be induced to give it a trial in the public interest. Means of curtailing the contraction of demand we have already noticed cursorily and we shall refer to them again.

We now push our inquiries to the point of asking to what extent temporary contraction of output to-day means temporary reduction of hands. From certain employers' returns to the Board of Trade it is possible

to get some information, though it is subject, as we shall observe, to certain errors. Thus nearly 400 firms in the cotton industry, employing more than 100,000 hands, render monthly reports of numbers paid wages and total wages paid. These facts may be taken as typical of the whole industry. Comparing the figures for the end of November in the last two years, we find a drop of 5 per cent. in numbers paid wages and of 13·3 per cent. in total wages paid. It is therefore roughly correct to argue that 13·3 per cent. was the total unemployment occasioned by depression between November, 1907, and November, 1908, that 5 per cent. was met by dismissal of hands and the remainder—*i.e.*, 8·3 per cent.—by short time for the operatives or for the businesses. This would mean that the work of those left in employment in 1908 was reduced 8·7 per cent. by short time. From returns for other trades similar calculations can frequently be made, but of course in all cases the returns are not equally representative. It should be observed, however, that in some cases the figures given in the table that follows to indicate contraction of output may be too high as the output does not always fall in the same degree as wages paid. Evidently if the labour retained were spread over all the machinery the output per head would tend to rise, since each man would work with more machinery on an average, and, were time rates paid, a rise in the output per head would not be reflected in aggregate wages.

The reader must, moreover, be reminded that the results are to some extent vitiated occasionally because changes have taken place in rates of wages between the two periods contrasted, because firms making returns have increased or decreased relatively to the industry as a whole, or because overtime has been worked in the first period. However, as regards the first point, it may be taken that a rise of wages would at least be most uncommon in months of gathering depression.

The following is an analysis of the employers' returns to which reference has been made. It is not needful to give the basis of calculation in each case, which is, for example, sometimes days or shifts worked, sometimes furnaces in blast, sometimes wages paid, and so forth. The sign − means contraction and the sign + expansion. We have omitted figures which seem to us to rest upon an inadequate statistical foundation :—

Industry.	1. Nos. to which the returns relate —persons unless otherwise stated. —1903.	
Coal Mining: Lancashire and Cheshire	57,445	...
United Kingdom	653,869	...
Iron, Shale and other Mining and Quarrying: United Kingdom	15,457	...
Pig Iron: Great Britain	*289	...
Tinplate and Steel Sheet Workers: United Kingdom	†444	...
Iron and Steel Works:		
Cumberland, Lancashire and Cheshire	8,695	...
United Kingdom	85,954	...
Cotton Trade:		
All districts in United Kingdom	115,305	...
Woollen Trade:		
All districts in United Kingdom	29,417	...
Worsted Trades:		
All districts in United Kingdom	48,343	...
Linen Trade: United Kingdom	46,119	...
Jute Trade: United Kingdom	17,570	...
Lace Trade: United Kingdom	8,918	...
Silk Trade: United Kingdom	8,508	...
Hosiery Trade: United Kingdom	17,478	...
Boot and Shoe Trade:		
Manchester and district	2,789	...
United Kingdom	63,458	...
Paper Trade: United Kingdom	22,953	...
Bookbinding Trade: United Kingdom	6,756	...
Building Trades: United Kingdom—		
Skilled tradesmen	21,615	...
Labourers	15,721	...
Glass Trades: United Kingdom	7,233	...
Fishing Industry: United Kingdom	—	...
Dock and Riverside Labour: London	12,703	...
Seamen Shipped: Liverpool	13,259	...
United Kingdom	35,983	...

* Furnaces. † Mills.

II. Percentage expansion (+) or contraction (−) of work between Nov., 1907, and Nov., 1908.	III. Percentage alteration in number of persons employed betw'n Nov., 1907, and Nov., 1908.	IV. Percentage alteration of hours worked by those in work between Nov., 1907, and Nov., 1908.	V. Percentage expansion (+) or contraction (−) of work between Nov., 1906, and Nov., 1907.	VI. Percentage alteration in number of persons employed betw'n Nov., 1906, and Nov., 1907.	VII. Percentage alteration of hours worked by those in work between Nov., 1906, and Nov., 1907.
—	—	−13.6	—	—	+2.8
—	—	−7.3	—	—	+1.8
—	—	+0.5	—	—	−1.9
−12.2	—	—	−3.5	—	—
−0.7	—	—	+1.3	—	—
−13.7	−18.1	+5.4	−12.9	−10.7	−2.5
−9.1	−6.7	−2.6	−5.0	−3.5	−1.6
−13.3	−5.0	−8.7	+1.1	+0.7	+0.4
−9.2	−2.9	−6.5	+2.3	+1.3	+1.0
−6.0	−2.0	−4.1	+6.3	+2.7	+3.7
−10.1	−2.4	−7.9	+4.1	+0.5	+3.6
−5.9	−2.6	−3.4	+7.8	+2.3	+5.6
−7.3	−3.6	−3.8	−4.2	+3.1	—
−8.1	−6.2	−2.0	+3.4	+3.6	−0.2
−1.4	−1.3	−0.1	+6.8	+3.9	+3.0
+1.6	−1.3	—	−3.8	−1.9	−2.0
−0.9	+2.4	—	+2.8	+0.6	+2.2
—	+2.5	—	—	+3.1	—
—	+1.7	—	—	−0.5	—
—	−6.8	—	—	−8.0	—
—	−9.2	—	—	−5.6	—
−11.8	−11.0	−0.9	+10.7	+10.2	+0.6
+1.6	—	—	+30.9	—	—
—	−8.5	—	—	−1.8	—
—	−9.8	—	—	+4.2	—
—	−11.1	—	—	+7.7	—

We have given, in addition to the differences between November, 1907, and November, 1908, those which appeared after the previous twelve months in order that the state of industry before the depression may be seen. It would not seem, from an examination of the third column of this table, that the percentage of unemployment generally among artisans was greater than that shown by the trade union figures considered in Chapter II., but the reader must be warned again that the figures in the third column do not strictly indicate the percentage thrown out of work. The average of the minus figures for the United Kingdom in this column is 5·4, that is to say, the percentage dismissal of hands throughout the country is probably about 5·4 on an average in the industries represented. The most striking feature in the table is the contrast between the second and third columns, which roughly indicates the degree in which the present depression is met by dismissal of hands. Thus, taking the textile industries, in the cotton trade 13·3 per cent. contraction of output means 5 per cent. dismissal of hands and 8·7 per cent. short time; in the woollen trade 9·2 contraction of output means 2·9 dismissal of hands and 6·5 per cent short time; in the worsted trade 6 per cent. contraction of output means 2 per cent. dismissal of hands and 4·1 per cent. short time; in the linen trade 10·1 per cent. contraction of output means only 2·4 per cent. dismissal of hands and 7·9 per cent. short time; in the silk trade 8·1 contraction of output means 6·2 per cent. dismissal of hands and 2·1 per cent. short time. Contrast with these conditions those of the glass trades in which 11·8 per cent. contraction of output means 11 per cent. dismissal of hands and less than 1 per cent. short time. Were labour usually dismissed in proportion to the contraction of production at times of bad trade, the numbers of the unemployed would evidently be enormous and the distress occasioned would be appalling. It appears to

be customary, however, for each business to absorb its own unemployed, so to speak, in no slight degree; that is, to spread the effects of reduced demand by providing proportionally less work for each hand retained. This cannot always be done, as we have already observed, and frequently it is difficult to arrange, but it ought to be tried even at some sacrifice, the benefit to labour being so enormous.

We were agreeably astonished to find, both from these figures and from direct inquiry, that the custom of spreading the effects of bad trade over all operatives in an industry was as common as it is. It would seem, too, to be gaining ground to some extent, probably because of the increasing value of a permanent staff in works growing in complexity and individuality. A heavy expense is incurred, in these days of highly intricate production, when men who have grown accustomed to the ways of a certain factory are permanently lost; and if they are not permanently lost they may be demoralised by complete idleness or lose efficiency through privation and anxiety. In some cases, of course, the drop in demand is not accompanied by a corresponding drop in output, and much production for stock goes on; but producing for stock articles the exact character of which varies with fashion is naturally risky. On simply averaging the minus figures relating to the United Kingdom in columns 2 and 3 for industries represented in both columns it will be seen that a shrinkage of business of 8·2 per cent. was met as regards 4·4 per cent. by dismissal of hands and as regards 3·8 per cent. by short time. These figures, of course, are only very rough indices.

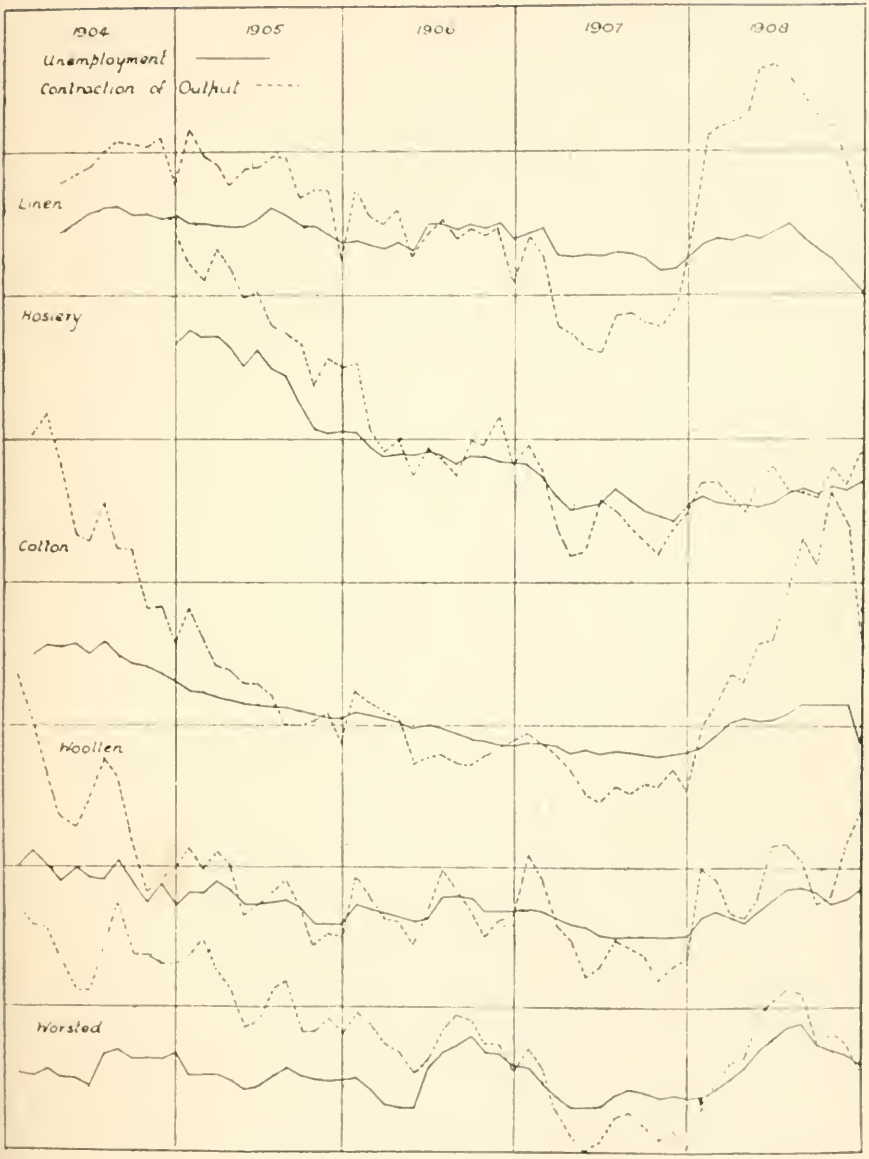
We have thought it desirable, at the cost of considerable labour, to represent continuously month by month for some years the relations between contraction of output and dismissal of hands in several industries. These relations for five textile industries (if hosiery may be

classed as textile) and four other industries are indicated by the curves on the diagrams on pages 55 and 56. The unbroken lines shew variations in complete unemployment (increased unemployment being marked by *ascents* of the curves) and the dotted lines contraction of output (contraction being marked also by *ascents* of the curves). The spaces between the horizontal lines mean 10 per cent. each. The nature of the figures used precludes us from interpreting any one curve as accurately indicating variation of output or employment, but the relations between the variations of an unbroken line and those of its corresponding dotted line should represent with only a small margin of error *the relations between unemployment and the contraction of output*. Observe that the exact position of any one of a pair of corresponding curves is not yielded by the figures. The absolute position of each curve is determined quite arbitrarily. The facts given us are the relations between the variations of the one and those of the other as regards the same industry. We have already described on pages 46 and 47 the nature of the figures used and noted the errors to which they might lead. Recurring to the matter on those pages we may observe now, however, that any error arising from a change in the rate of wages would be confined merely to the month in which the change took place. Perhaps, to avoid confusion, we had better repeat the sources of our material. For the cotton, woollen, worsted, linen, hosiery, boot and shoe, and glass trades, among others, the *Labour Gazette* publishes each month from employers' returns the monthly and yearly percentage variations in number of workpeople employed and in the amount of wages paid, care being taken, as the *Gazette* has frequently pointed out, to make use only of the returns of those firms who have furnished such returns for the two periods under comparison. It is the percentage variations month by month that are shown by the curves on our diagrams

for the trades mentioned. If we take the total wages paid to be directly proportional to the total output (which would be practically the case if no change in rate of wages had occurred) we have in these returns indices not only of employment but of output. In the case of the coal mining and the iron and steel trades, the dotted curves are based on figures of a slightly different kind. The output has been considered as being directly proportional to the *volume of employment*, that is, to the product of the number of workpeople employed multiplied by the average number of shifts worked. The percentage monthly variation in the volume of employment has been calculated exactly as the percentage monthly variation in the total wages paid in the textile trade was calculated.

The striking features about the diagrams are the different degrees in which contraction of output brings about dismissal of hands. Of the textile trades the cotton industry seems to be most successful in avoiding the creation of the unemployed in times of trade depression, and the woollen industry appears to be more successful than the worsted. The boot and shoe trade is wavering in its policy; but the iron and steel and glass industries throw off unemployed with every fluctuation of trade. The facts revealed in the diagrams, the errors contained in them notwithstanding, make it plain that a fruitful investigation might be conducted into the policies of different industries in the matter of dismissal of hands at times of bad trade, the conditions of those policies and the possibilities of their being modified. We conclude our comments by referring our readers back to the opening paragraphs of this chapter.

We may appropriately append here a few notes upon the industrial causes which have been operating of late to bring about depression in certain industries, apart from those associated with the trade cycle. Great changes have taken place in the last few years in blast-furnace and steel practice, partly under the pressure of


1904
1905
1906
1907
1908
Unemployment
Contraction of Output
Linen
Hosiery
Cotton
Woollen
Worsted

1904
1905
1906
1907
1908
Unemployment
Contraction of Output
Coal Mining
Glass
Iron & Steel
Boot & Shoe

American competition. The extension of the American system of substituting steel for wood in buildings, seen in the growing use of steel framing and iron girders, and the use of fireproof floors, have naturally affected the joiners and carpenters, who have felt also the reaction of the collapse in ship-building already explained. In connection with boiler-making, we may notice the increasing use made of gas engines and of hydraulic and electric power. Coachmakers are going through a special depression after the exceptional demand for tramcars and motor-cars. A new machine partly accounts for the high percentage of unemployment among beamers, twisters, and drawers, in contrast with the percentage for other cotton operatives. Northrop looms scarcely need be mentioned, as there are as yet only about 5,000 or 6,000 running in Lancashire.

Some employers have argued, in conversation and in replies to our inquiries, that the Workmen's Compensation Act is partially responsible for the numbers at present unemployed. Other employers have, however, expressed the view that it has had no effect of this kind, or no appreciable effect. The question, in our opinion, could not be settled without a specific inquiry. *Prima facie*, it is not easy to reconcile the view unfavourable to the Act with the fact that insurance companies are not, so far as we can gather, regulating their premiums by the age distribution among the hands in works insured. It may be, nevertheless, that employers are selecting their hands more carefully, lest the average of the accidents in their works should rise and they should be required to take special precautions or pay a surcharge on their premiums. Some works are more dangerous than others, even in the same industry, and an attempt to make up for greater dangerousness by a choice of hands least likely to meet with accidents is at least comprehensible. Suspicion that some employers were acting in this way might even induce others whose

works were not specially dangerous to do the same, lest the average of their accidents should rise through the faults of their employees and they should be surcharged all the same. It cannot be said definitely that this is actually happening, to the discomfiture of the older workpeople, and it yet remains to be proved that the older man is more liable to accident, or serious accident, than the younger man. The older man can certainly be reckoned upon to exercise greater caution. It would seem, indeed, from the statistics published by Messrs. Brunner, Mond and Co., that the middle-aged and comparatively elderly workmen are less liable to accident than the younger workmen.

The figures supplied by Messrs. Brunner, Mond and Co. are given below. They are based on averages covering 15 years in the case of four works and 8 years in the case of one factory.

Ages ...	18-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	51-55	56 & over
No. of Men... ...	633	533	616	656	531	382	251	246
Percentage of Accidents per annum	8·5	6·8	4·2	3·6	2·8	3·7	2·4	2·4

The general drop in the percentage as the age rises is most striking. The percentage age distribution in the works was as follows:—

21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	51-55	56 and over
10·3	13·9	16·0	17·0	13·8	9·9	6·5	6·4

Upon this Sir John Brunner comments:—

"The drop from 17 per cent. for 36–40 to 13·8 per cent. for 41–45 is noteworthy, but I am able to say with confidence that it is in no sense due to a feeling on the part of our Managers that a man is too old at 40. It is due to the fact that a required gradual increase in the

total number of employees has been met by the taking on of youngsters, few of whom have yet reached middle age. At one of our works the number of men has remained practically constant during the whole of the fifteen years, and there the figures of percentage run as follows, beginning with the ages 21–25 and ending with 56 and upwards:—10·0, 15·8, 13·5, 13·2, 11·4, 13·5, 7·7, 8·9."

In addition to the above we have been provided with the following evidence by two large firms of cotton spinners and weavers, relating to total accidents in their thirteen mills, and by a large colliery company. As the age-distribution of the workers employed is not given, we are unable to state these figures in the same form as those previously quoted. Though they do not confirm the conclusion to which Messrs. Brunner, Mond & Co.'s statistics point, they can hardly be held to indicate the contrary.

Returns relating to six mills (spinning) during the period July, 1907—February, 1909.

Ages	12-14		15-24		25-34		35-44		45-54		55-64		65-74	
	Males	Fem.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
No. of Accidents	15	4	15	13	22	4	18	8	23	4	5	1	1	1
Percentages	14·2		20·9		19·4		19·4		20·1		4·5		1·5	

Returns relating to seven mills (spinning and weaving) during the years 1906–7–8.

Ages	15-24		25-34		35-44		45-54		55-64		65-74	
	Spinning	Weaving	S.	W.	S.	W.	S.	W.	S.	W.	S.	W.
No. of Accidents	66	18	11	12	2	3	6	19	3	0	0	0
Percentages	75	34·6	12·5	23·1	2·2	5·8	6·8	36·5	3·4	—	—	—

Returns relating to certain collieries.

Ages	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74
No. of Accidents	190	199	120	84	17	0
Percentages	31·1	32·6	19·7	13·8	2·8	—

CHAPTER IV.

Unemployment Revealed by Distress Committees, Guardians, and Censuses.

We cannot supplement the material contained in our second Chapter, as we should like to do, with statistics of unemployment of non-unionists since no such statistics exist. We pass on, then, to the figures supplied by Distress Committees and Guardians and disclosed in censuses, with the object of finding out how many male persons altogether are without work to-day in Lancashire. Most of those who apply for distress work, or enter at such public labour exchanges as there are, happen, indeed, to be non-unionists, for reasons which lie on the surface. It is a purely fortuitous, though very convenient, circumstance that the two chief groups of material, from which ideas of the extent of unemployment over a wide area can be deduced, refer to quite distinct classes of the community. Trade unionists do not apply to distress committees in large numbers, because many of them are drawing their out-of-work benefits, and the rest dislike association with the class of people who throng the gates where relief work is assigned and dread the risk of losing caste. Again, their trade unions are their registry offices and very effective ones. But, the foregoing notwithstanding, we have found a judicious disposition among some trade unions to utilise relief works for the assistance of their members; and in some places arrangements have been made for the secretary of the trade union to send in the names of members who would be glad to get temporary jobs of any kind. That this disposition would spread were the conditions of relief work somewhat modified, we have no doubt. For in periods of lengthy depression very many trade unionists run through their

benefits and are left destitute, while others who belong to the poorer unions have no benefits, or only slight benefits, to run through. This is a question to which we shall address ourselves later.

It would have been highly desirable to get figures of the dismissal of non-unionists corresponding to those set forth in Chapter II. relating to unionists, but it was impossible in the absence of records. However, we have seen reason in Chapter III. to believe that the discarding of labour from the industries of the country has probably meant a reduction in the number industrially employed of about $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., which is exactly the same as the percentage of unemployment among unionists outside engineering and ship-building. A glance at the table on page 49 will show that engineering and ship-building do not enter into the former figure. We must not, of course, infer, from the fact that the percentage of unemployment shown by employers' returns and the percentage of unemployment returned by the trade unions are identical, that unemployment is exactly the same among non-unionists as among unionists. The statistical basis of our calculations is not firm enough to support such a quantitative generalisation. It is reasonable, nevertheless, to argue that one would have expected the former figure to be much higher were the non-unionists at any serious disadvantage, as regards risk of unemployment, in comparison with unionists, it being understood, of course, that we include in the non-unionists covered by this statement only those ordinarily employable. There are grounds for supposing unemployment to be greater among non-unionists, and again grounds for supposing it to be less. In many industries, no doubt, the pick of the labour is in the trade unions. On the other hand, the non-unionist is not tied up by wages regulations, and he can therefore bend to the storm at choice. He may keep a place by accepting a temporary reduction and get to work again among the

first as slackness passes away by agreeing to begin with a low wage. In short, his wages are more elastic. Even if he were proved to be less liable to unemployment than the unionist, the fact, of course, would not necessarily be a reproach to trade unionism. There would be many other considerations to take into account before the balance of benefit or the reverse resulting from trade-union policy could be determined. Though the non-unionist might be unemployed less, and therefore for that reason tend to earn more on an average, the average annual wages brought about under trade-union policy might nevertheless be greater. But we must resist the temptation to enter upon a discussion which would leave us at a remote distance from the object of our present investigation. We, therefore, force ourselves at once to examine the evidence relating to the extent of unemployment yielded by labour exchanges and distress committees, Poor Law returns, and local censuses.

The sparsity and ineffectiveness, as a rule, of the labour exchanges in this country prevent their records from affording any adequate insight into the state of unemployment. There are only five labour registries in Lancashire. The one at Bolton was, however, only started in January of this year, and consequently no returns of the numbers on its books are yet available. The number of males (who are mainly non-unionists or unionists whose benefits have run out) remaining on the books of the other four at the end of the months stated were as follows :—

	Nov. 1908	Dec. 1908	Jan. 1909	Feb. 1909
Liverpool ...	6	11	13	11
Manchester ...	7,329	8,217	6,390	2,848
Salford	466	166	166	177
Warrington ...	247	236	254	269
Total ...	8,048	6,630	6,823	3,305

Clearly these figures afford no indication of the numbers of males out of work who are not drawing benefits from trade unions—note the figures for Liverpool. Again, only five towns possess labour registries, and the general rule is that only those who have resided in the district for some time are permitted to enter. The bulk of the unemployed labour of Lancashire is consequently not registered. Moreover, the records of the towns with labour registries must be read with caution. Many people are undoubtedly admitted who are never in regular work, particularly in places where applications for distress work are made at the same office. In these places, again, respectable people, non-unionists as well as unionists, are repelled by the appearance of many of those who gather about the offices. They are afraid of permanently losing caste, as we have already indicated, if they join the crowd, and their fears are intensified when they realise the close association between the labour exchanges and the relief of distress. There are many people out of work but not yet in desperate straits who are too proud to come in touch with relief or semi-relief agencies. Going to the labour bureau seems to them much like going before the Guardians. Not a few, also, have no confidence in the ability of the registry to get them work. Hence it is apparent that the labour bureaux figures contain errors in opposite directions; and it is impossible to say without minute investigation which group of errors predominates at any particular place. There are many unemployed, apart from those drawing benefits from trade unions, who are not included in these figures, and there are many included who are not regular workers.

The figures furnished by distress committees are more adequate, but they need to be considered side by side with those of the labour bureaux. Lancashire contains 17 distress committees. Their returns of numbers of adult males known to be out of work and the percentage

of the same to population are given beneath for the end of November :—

	Nov., 1908	Percentage of population of district
Manchester	4,900	·9
Manchester Labour Registry	7,300	1·3
Barrow	1,840	3·2
Blackburn	250	·2
Bolton	1,170	·7
Bootle	260	·4
Burnley	1,050	1·1
Bury	320	·6
Gorton	400	1·5
Heywood	250	1·0
Liverpool	2,000	·3
Middleton	290	1·2
Oldham	270	·2
Preston	540	·5
Rochdale	290	·4
St. Helens	680	·8
Salford	1,590	·7
Salford Labour Registry ...	466	·3
Warrington Labour Registry	190	·3

The aggregate number returned as out of work in February, 1909, by the places here mentioned was about 15 per cent. lower than the aggregate number for November, 1908.

It is hardly necessary to point out that the distress committees in this table do not cover even the industrial area of Lancashire, while there is no distress committee of the County Council at work for the rural districts, where it must not be assumed that unemployment is non-existent. Until quite recently the Local Government Board had not been asked by a single County Council for permission to establish a Distress Committee. One County Borough (Wigan), with a population of

62,000, thirteen municipal boroughs and eleven urban districts, with populations of over 20,000 each and an aggregate population of nearly 760,000, have made no provision for dealing with unemployment.

It is possible that some of these boroughs are among the thirty-three districts which have been refused permission to establish Distress Committees by the Local Government Board on the ground that there was no exceptional distress in their particular areas. Whether this be the case or not, the fact remains that in the absence of Distress Committees and Labour Exchanges no adequate information as to the extent of unemployment in these areas is available.

A glance at the last column of the table will be sufficient to satisfy the reader that the returns of distress committees are not exact registers of the extent of unemployment among those not receiving trade union benefits. It is hardly likely that the percentage of these to population in the area covered should range from ·2 to 3·2—*i.e.*, that the quantity of this kind of distress should be sixteen times greater in one industrial place than in another. Barrow, of course, is exceptional, for reasons which have been explained, but a difference between ·2 (Oldham) and ·7 (Bolton) is quite large enough to shake our confidence in these returns, which are evidently open to the same sources of error as the returns of labour exchanges. Many who are out of work and have saved a little would not apply for distress work lest it should diminish their chances of getting work again, and many of those who apply for distress work are known to be comparatively incurable loafers who live regularly on others and engage perhaps in a little casual work when trade is good. They are given a trial for the sake of their families when those who ought to be dependent upon them lose their work. Moreover, the appearance of many of these people at the labour bureaux and places for the registration of persons desiring

distress work has been an unavoidable result of the endeavours, both of individuals and of societies, to induce the unemployed person, of whatever grade of skill, to register his name on the books of the distress committees, so that a true estimate of the extent of unemployment may be arrived at. The existence of 20,000 to 30,000 professional vagrants, to whom attention was called by the Committee on Vagrancy, and of the criminal and semi-criminal classes, must not be ignored when the problem of unemployment is under discussion. An attempt is usually made by distress committees to exclude vagrants by requiring that persons registering shall have resided in the district for twelve months, but they flock to the towns nevertheless to pick up such casual relief as is to be had and swell the unemployed crowds, thereby rendering the position of the genuinely industrious who are unemployed no less awkward than that of the authorities responsible for coping with unemployment.

It will be seen that 16,100 adult males (males over 18) were returned as out of work at the end of November by Lancashire distress committees. To this number we may add the unemployed shown by the Labour Registry of Warrington (190), which has no distress works. Manchester records 7,290 adult males in the books of its exchange, but only 4,900 applications for relief work. The great bulk of the latter are known to be included in the former figure. We must therefore raise our total of 16,290 by the difference between 7,290 and 4,900, making a total of 18,680, which is practically constituted entirely of non-unionists, though not entirely of efficient workmen. The population of the areas to which these figures relate was (in 1901) 2,700,000, as compared with 4,150,000 for the whole of the county boroughs and other urban districts of Lancashire, the total population of which was 4,400,000. If, therefore, distress committees or labour exchanges had covered

the whole of urban Lancashire, and the fresh areas so included had yielded results similar to those recorded above (as they would hardly have done, particularly as the unemployables gather in the large towns, the bulk of which contribute figures of unemployment), the figure for the whole of urban Lancashire would have been about 29,000. This number would be about 6 per cent. of the non-unionist adult male wage-earners of Lancashire (exclusive of those engaged in agriculture, fishing, and commercial pursuits). Our more or less wild guess at the number of unemployed male trade unionists in Lancashire was 22,000, but we cannot pretend to offer this as scientific estimating.

We should add to our figures the unemployed males receiving relief from the Guardians, but it is not possible to get very definite information from the published statistics. In England and Wales 20,000 able-bodied adults in health received indoor relief on January 1, 1907. Much less than half of these would be males. The able-bodied males who drew outdoor relief numbered 16,000, but only 2,200 of these were assisted because they were out of work or for reasons unconnected with sickness or death in the family. Many others, assisted because of sickness or death in the family, were no doubt out of work. Lancashire on January 1, 1907, contained between one-sixth and one-seventh of the indoor paupers and about one-twelfth of the outdoor paupers, and the latest returns show that pauperism in Lancashire increased about 13 per cent. in the last twelve months, or by 10,000 persons of all ages, and much of this increase would be due to the depression in trade. Though this evidence is insufficient to support an estimate, it is sufficient to indicate that the number of able-bodied male adults relieved by the Guardians in Lancashire in consequence of want of work must be small compared with the figures of unemployment given above.

In considering the case of the unemployment among

trade unionists, we feel the predominating presence of an industrial cause, but when we come to examine the facts revealed by distress committees the personal causes of unemployment force themselves more to the front. The personal causes are physical, intellectual, or moral. Some persons, on account of physical defects, are unfit for continuous employment or unable to earn more than a pittance at any time. Others are periodically without work because they are unintelligent, whether by reason of neglected education and a mis-spent youth or of the taint of feeble-mindedness received at birth. The numbers of the feeble-minded alone at large in the world without the stability of will to guide their lives must be absolutely large: it would seem probable, from the evidence given to the Royal Commission on the Feeble-Minded, that they constitute about 5 per cent. of the habitués of casual wards, cheap lodging-houses and night shelters. To the problem of the feeble-minded we shall return when we come to treat of remedies. And as regards the unintelligence which does not imply actual 'feeble-mindedness' it must be remembered that economic progress means usually increasing demand for intelligence, and that it may therefore render the employment of the least intelligent increasingly precarious. The more precarious the work of the least efficient, the more rapidly is the army of unemployables recruited from their ranks. For as soon as they are out of work they are in distress, and the longer distress lasts the more physically incapable they become.

However charitable we may be disposed to be in our judgment of our fellows it is impossible to be entirely blind to the fact that large numbers of the chronically unemployed have brought their troubles upon themselves. There are still the criminal and semi-criminal amongst us whose consistently shabby records keep them out of work. There are, too, the drunkards, gamblers, and incorrigible idlers. Drunkenness and idleness may

be traceable to a wasted youth, but, wherever the responsibility resides, the fact remains that in too many cases these are the causes of unemployment. One of the most remarkable constituents of the population consists in the people who are neither criminals nor drunkards, nor positively vicious in any way, but who are incurable loafers. They tramp the country, beg, do odd jobs very occasionally, pass through casual wards and cheap lodging-houses, and exist somehow, not in all cases unhappily. Mr. Charles Booth has drawn this picture of them :—" These men hang about for the 'odd hour' or work one day in the seven. They live on stimulants and tobacco, varied with bread and tea and salt fish. Their passion is gambling. Sections of them are hereditary casuals; a larger proportion drift from other trades. They have a constitutional hatred to regularity and forethought and a need for paltry excitement; they are late risers, sharp-witted talkers, and, above all, they have that agreeable tolerance for their own and each other's vices which seem characteristic of a purely leisured class, whether it lies at the top or the bottom of society." These people are by instinct parasitic on the community. They flock to the towns where relief funds are being dispensed, hang on to street processions, and being always in evidence, unfortunately for those who are anxious and willing to work, confound public opinion about the nature of the problem of unemployment. Some of them who have encumbrances in the form of wives and children, upon whom they usually live, succeed in getting a share of distress work (for some will have residence qualifications), and when they do so they tend to contaminate the other workers and damage the relief works in the eyes of the public. To sum up upon the question of the personal causes of unemployment, there exists in the country a large body of unemployable or semi-employable people. Some are curable, many are incurable. The cause of the unemployability may be

physical defects, misfortune, idleness or vice. It will be a part of our task later to suggest how these classes defined by the causes of the evil may be dealt with.

After the immense difficulties we have encountered in trying to get an approximately exact quantitative conception of the extent of complete unemployment, and after dwelling upon our results, which we cannot regard as at all satisfactory, we feel impelled to urge that unemployment should be made one of the subjects of inquiry at the next census. Each person might be asked to state also how long he had been out of work, if out of work. Answers to this inquiry would yield reasonably correct figures for one year, and it is such figures of which the investigator is so badly in need. There are indices of the variations of unemployment in plenty, but it is impossible to deduce from these the absolute quantity of unemployment for any one year. If each census gave the absolute figures of unemployment, by use of these indices the figures for intervening years could be deduced with some approach to correctness. Such a census is taken in France, and has been tried in many places.

District censuses tell very little as to the general extent of unemployment. We may, however, quote here the results of censuses taken in Ancoats (where a heavy percentage of unemployment would naturally be looked for) by the Manchester University Settlement in each year between 1904 and 1908. Each November about 1,500 houses were visited and a population of about 6,000 was covered. The results to which attention may be called now were :—

	1904	1905	1906	1907	1908
Percentage of unemployed men to population	4·6	3·4	1·9	2·0	3·2
Percentage of unemployed women to population	1·0	0·5	0·4	0·2	0·7
Percentage of unemployed to adult population	—	—	3·7	3·6	6·6

If this district of Ancoats could be taken as typical of the whole county the number of adult male unemployed people would be about 140,000, which, in our opinion, would probably be at least three times too high.

The census taken by the Manchester City Council on March 3rd, 1909, shewed that nearly 16,100 males were out of work. Only 510 of these had resided in Manchester for less than twelve months. The percentage of unemployed men to population works out at 2·8, which is well beneath the figure for Ancoats. Of the 16,100, all but 800 were over 18. The percentage of the occupied males over 18 in Manchester unemployed would seem just to exceed 9—a very high figure, but it must be remembered that it is in the big towns that the unemployables and loafers congregate most thickly. Further, it must be remarked that about 1,200 were suffering from some bodily infirmity or were incapacitated from working, while nearly 3,800 of the 16,100 returned themselves as casually or partially employed, and it is not known how many of the latter ever enjoy other than intermittent employment. Between 6 and 7 per cent. of the able-bodied adult males would, therefore, seem to be completely without work; but it ought to be mentioned that, in addition to the numbers mentioned above, 820 able-bodied males were inmates of workhouses within the city. The extraordinary discrepancy between the figures above and those furnished by the Manchester Labour Registry is difficult to explain. The census results have yet to be verified. More than half the unemployed discovered by the Manchester census were married. Some 3,700 declared that they belonged to Provident, Friendly, Co-operative, or Insurance Societies, but it is not clear what exactly is to be understood by this. Two thousand two hundred of the 16,100 were trade unionists, as we have already remarked.

CHAPTER V.

Ages, Trades and Past Work of the Unemployed.

Much can be learnt of the organic nature, as opposed to the mechanical aspect, of the problem of unemployment by noting the ages and looking into the past experiences of those who are now idle for want of work. No adequate statistical information is obtainable as regards age, duration of enforced idleness, and length of previous employment in the case of the unemployed who are trade unionists, but much relating to these points in the case of non-unionists, and concerning previous occupation, can be learnt from the application papers of those on the registers of labour exchanges or distress committees. Some 3,250 applicants presented themselves at the offices of the Manchester Labour Exchange between July, 1907, and June, 1908. The age distribution among these, contrasted with that among the male population of Lancashire between the ages of 15 and 75 engaged in occupations, is shown in the table beneath. These statistics are supplemented by others relating to November, 1908, when distress was more acute. The latter are based on the examination of a sample lot of 334 November applications at the Manchester Labour Exchange. For the purpose of further comparison we have set side by side with these two sets of figures similar figures concerning persons entered on the books of the distress committees connected with the Central (Unemployed)

Body for London, of whom there were more than 26,000 in the year ending June, 1907 :—

Age-groups.	Percentages of occupied population between these ages in Lancashire.	Percentages of applicants to Manchester Labour Exchge Nov., 1908.	Percentages of applicants to Manchester Labour Exchge year ending June, 1908.	Percentages of applicants to London Labour Exchge year ending June, 1907.
15 to 25	30·7	32·7	36·4	14·4
25 to 35	26·3	29·1	29·3	31·1
35 to 45	19·8	21·6	20·3	28·2
45 to 55	13·6	12·0	9·6	17·7
55 to 65	7·3	3·3	3·7	6·9
65 to 75	2·3	1·2		1·4

One very disturbing contrast is brought out by this table. The proportions of male wage-earners unemployed in Manchester (so far as they enter the Labour Exchange) would seem to be greater in every division of age up to 45 than in any division of age over 45. That is to say, unemployment is most severe among the young and those in the prime of life. No doubt many small errors creep into this statistical record. The older men may not apply so readily to the labour exchange, and it is probable that the temptation to understate age is frequently irresistible when a man is over 45. But these considerations will hardly explain away the significance of the contrast, since one would naturally expect it to be in the opposite direction, especially when one bears in mind that the number under 18 unemployed is not high, and that therefore unemployment between 18 and 25 is greater even than one would at first infer from the table. Unemployment ought, one would imagine, to be least severe between 25 and 35. It will be remembered that trade unionists are not included in these returns, and that many other unemployed people of the most respectable classes do not register for reasons which we have already given,

but the results are grave enough even though they may refer exclusively to a particular section of the population.

The statistics may be supplemented by similar ones furnished by the Manchester census of March 3rd, 1909. They are as follows contrasted with the age-distribution of the occupied male population of Lancashire :—

Age-group	Percentage of occupied population between these ages in Lancashire	Percentage of unemployed in Manchester between these ages
14—25	—	26·9
15—25	30·7	—
25—35	26·3	26·4
35—45	19·8	24·4
45—55	13·6	14·3
55—65	7·3	8·8
Over 65	2·3	3·2

The distribution of unemployment by age seems to correspond roughly with the distribution of employment by age, but one would not expect them to correspond. Young men ought not to be in serious danger of loss of work. And the distribution of unemployment by age is more disturbing than appears on the surface since the Manchester census figures show 3,500 between 18 and 25 unemployed and only 800 between 14 and 18. It would seem that the percentage of the unemployed between 18 and 25 is actually higher, though only just higher, than the percentage of the employed between these ages, according to such calculations as can be made from the national census.

We have also made an analysis of the ages of those who applied for distress work in Salford in November, 1908, excluding applications received through trade unions on behalf of their members. Certain qualifications are demanded of persons registered for distress work, who are therefore constituted a select group of the unem-

ployed. No one is admitted unless he has resided within the borough during the preceding twelve months, is of good character, and has a wife, child, or other person dependent upon him. He must, too, have been regularly employed and have a fair character. The rule was, further, until the middle of November, that no person should be admitted who had received parish relief during the previous twelve months or been on the books of the Distress Committee for more than two years in succession. In addition, it has been the custom to exclude dock labourers and men separated from their wives. The following are the figures, together with similar ones for November, 1908, kindly supplied by the Liverpool and Blackburn Distress Committees, and side by side with them for comparison are others based on the record papers of men employed at London County and Royal parks, Osea Island, Garden City, and Fambridge, under the direction of the London Distress Committees, from August, 1905, to May, 1906. The London figures refer only to heads of families:—

Age-groups.	Percentages of occupied population in these age-groups according to Census Returns (Lancs.)	Percentages of unemployed on the books of the Salford Distress Committee in the age-groups.	Percentages of unemployed on books of the Liverpool Distress Committee in the age-groups.	Percentages of unemployed on books of the Blackburn Distress Committee in the age-groups.	Percentages of those employed on relief works of the London Distress Committee in the age-groups.
15 to 25	30·7	6·3	18·8	12·4	7·9
25 to 35	26·3	34·5	35·2	38·8	35·5
35 to 45	19·8	33·3	19·8	29·2	36·4
45 to 55	13·6	19·7	14·9	12·4	15·8
55 to 65	7·3	5·2	8·5	4·4	4·1
65 to 75	2·3	1·0	2·7	2·8	—
Not stated ...	—	—	—	—	·3

The complete divergence between these and the previous figures in the case of the first age-group (viz., 15 to 25

years) is accounted for by the fact that single men are wholly excluded from the London work and virtually excluded from the Salford, Liverpool and Blackburn work. The high percentages for the age-groups 25—35 and 35—45 of the unemployed are the striking features in this table, though they are explained partly, of course, by the low percentages for the first age-group. We may further add here that of 191 unemployed males whose ages were taken in the census conducted by the Manchester University Settlement 14 per cent. were under 21, 43 *per cent. between* 21 *and* 35 (note the enormous percentage of this age-group), 7 per cent. between 36 and 40, 20 per cent. between 41 and 50, and 16 per cent. over 50. No doubt in the interpretation of these results something must be allowed to the facts that in so many cases a young man out of his time must move to better himself, that the weeding out from a trade of those unsuitable for it must take place as a rule before the rejected have reached thirty, and that employers feel the greatest obligations to those who have been with them longest.

In confirmation of this view we ought to quote some statistics relating to two Lancashire branches of trade unions, the one in engineering and the other in carpentering, which have kindly supplied us with an analysis of their books. Averaging the returns which relate to 450 persons, we find that of members unemployed in November, 1908, all of whom were adults, 15 per cent. were under 25, 39 per cent. were between 25 and 35, 18 per cent. were between 35 and 45, and 27 per cent. over 45. But this evidence is not, of course, sufficient to establish a generalisation, and it becomes doubtful as an indication of what is normal, at any rate as regards the comparatively high 39 per cent. constituted by those between 25 and 35, when it is set side by side with similar statistics already known. Thus a Board of Trade analysis of some of the " vacant " books of the

Amalgamated Society of Engineers for 1895, a year of medium employment, showed that the average number of days lost in excess of three through want of employment was 8·8 for members between 15 and 25, 13·1 for members between 25 and 35, 12·3 for those between 35 and 45, 20·1 for those between 45 and 55, 33·1 for those between 55 and 65, and 26·9 for all over 65. The average per head was 15·1. This evidence is not easily brought into relation with the foregoing, but it tends to establish the view that in spite of the changing in place and occupation which naturally occurs in the restless ages between 25 and 35 people within those limits of age are not excessively subject to unemployment. And, recurring to the 39 per cent. of unemployment (which we believe to be abnormal in the case of skilled workers) falling to persons of these ages in the branches of engineering and carpentering unions in Lancashire which have been so good as to make us returns, we may observe that the size of this figure is partly consequent upon the fact that the percentage of unemployment falling to those under 25 is only 15 per cent.

To sum up, it is clear that statistics fail to lead us to a certain conclusion, but the impression left upon our minds is that the numbers of the comparatively youthful among the unemployed generally, and particularly among those who have been brought to light by the activities of public authorities, is a fact the gravity of which cannot be explained away. Appreciable numbers are no doubt the rejected of the skilled trades, but, if these numbers are the main cause, why, we may ask, are so many rejected when the skilled trades are certainly not receiving their proportionate share, according to the state of demand for labour, of the rising generation? Probably one of the chief causes of the high relative numbers of the comparatively youthful unemployed consists in the fact that so many of them have never been properly inducted into a skilled or semi-skilled occupation.

Large numbers of young people drift through *cul-de-sac* boy employments into the over-stocked ranks of the unskilled, and many of them verge on inefficiency not by reason of inborn defects, but because their early occupations, which called for little application and were interpersed with periods of loafing, gradually undermined their powers. The need of agencies to direct boys and girls to trades at the critical age is only less pressing than the need of better education and a more extensively utilised continuation system. Such agencies exist, but they are wholly inadequate in view of the magnitude of the work to be done. And as regards education, it is urgent that the community should realise how fast the demand for developed intelligence and alertness is growing, that it is growing naturally at the expense of the demand for mere physical power, and how necessary it is that provision should be made for this by our training of the young. The person who has been technically trained on narrow lines may be forced out of a well-paid occupation at middle-age by a shrinkage of his trade's demand for labour, and find himself compelled to pick up a living for the rest of his life at unskilled work for which he is unsuited, or at casual occupations, because he is incapable of getting a grip of a new skilled calling, even if it be not strikingly dissimilar from his original one. No wonder he loses hope. No wonder many in his position become 'unemployables' and perhaps drunkards and loafers. The question, What should be done? is one to which a self-respecting community must find an answer. To take any measures to resist change would be to put a stop to progress and accept pessimism. It would be to sacrifice advantages for all, and, what would be equally depressing, to sacrifice aspirations. And so drastic a remedy, implied, for instance, in any resistance to the introduction of machinery, is needless and might easily fail to achieve its end. The right solution of the

difficulty can only be found in a firm and widespread conviction that a broadly scientific training of a technological as opposed to a technical character (if we may use these terms to indicate the difference which we have in mind) must take the place of induction to skill along purely empirical lines. Apprenticeship with all that it used to imply will not meet modern requirements, the keynote of the demand proceeding from which is developed intelligence and adaptability—skill as opposed to dexterity.

Many other significant features may be pointed out in the information obtained from Labour Exchanges and Distress Committees. In the following table will be found figures showing the length of time the 334 men whose cases we examined were out of work before application was made for admission to the Manchester Labour Exchange, similar figures for those who asked for relief work in Salford in November, 1908, and statistics of the periods of unemployment of those discovered to be out of work by the Ancoats census:—

Length of Time	Percentages		Ancoats
	Manchester Labour Exchange	Salford Distress Committee	
Under 1 week	5 ...	4 ...	20
Between 1 and 2 weeks...	8 ...	8 ...	
Between 2 and 3 weeks...	6 ...	10 ...	
Between 3 and 4 weeks...	6 ...	9 ...	
Between 1 and 2 months	22 ...	32 ...	31
Between 2 and 3 months	14 ...	9 ...	
Between 3 and 6 months	22 ...	20 ...	21
Between 6 and 12 months	13 ...	9 ...	23
One year or more	5 ...	0·7 ...	5

It is some satisfaction to observe that only 10 per cent. of those who applied for distress work in Salford in November, 1908, had been out of work for more than

six months, but that 5 per cent. only should have registered at the Manchester Exchange within the first week of their unemployment seems to indicate but slight confidence in the ability of the Exchange to find posts at the present time. It is a very remarkable fact that 22 per cent. of the men placed on the books of the Manchester Exchange last November had waited from one to two months, and that 22 per cent. even had waited for so long a period as three to six months before registering.

The duration of unemployment shown by the Manchester census of March 3rd, 1909, was as follows, expressed in percentages, in the case of the 15,000 who gave particulars:—

	Percentage.
Under 1 month	3·7
1 month to 3 months	13·0
3 months to 6 months	27·3
6 ,, ,, 9 ,, ...	27·8
9 ,, ,,12 ,, ...	28·2

The duration of previous employment is usually given on the forms filled in for Labour Exchanges and Distress Comittees, and applicants know that their statements may be verified, and that for making false returns they may be refused a place on the registers. Our examination of 334 of the forms handed in to the Manchester Labour Exchange in November last showed that 45 persons had not stated the duration of previous employment. The omission was common among the papers handed in at the branch libraries of the city instead of at the Exchange in King Street. The length of the previous employment of the remainder is given in the table below, side by side with similar figures relating to the November (1908) applicants for relief work in Salford and the percentages of longest period of previous employment mentioned by

persons admitted to the London Labour Exchange up to May, 1906:—

Period	Percentages			
	Manchester Labour Exchange	Salford Distress Committee	Longest period of employment mentioned on Record paper (London Distress Com'tees)	
Under 1 month	2	6	...	3·5
From 1 to 3 months ...	5	14·6	...	
From 3 to 6 months ...	14	8·5	...	4·1
From 6 to 12 months...	17	13·4	...	8·8
From 1 to 2 years ...	21	9·7	...	7·9
From 2 to 3 years ...	10	10·4	...	63·1
From 3 to 30 years ...	30	22·0	...	
"On and off" or "Casual"	*	10·9	...	7·6
Not stated	3·6	—	...	—

* Not given.

As many as 38 per cent. of the Manchester applicants and 42 per cent. of the Salford applicants had previously held posts for less than 12 months, and these percentages may certainly be taken as the very bottom limit, for all would be anxious to make out as strong a case as possible for assistance. That is to say, some 3,500 people of those judged good enough for admission to the registers had previously had more or less broken employment, and it must be remembered that many of those who returned longer periods were engaged only casually by the firms who had employed them. The amount of drifting, flotsam and jetsam, labour in the community is considerable—far greater than should be possible—and it is the prime fount of more social troubles than could easily be defined.

The results of this analysis are borne out by inquiries into the 'trades' of the unemployed. We should expect, after considering the numbers who had been dependent upon broken employment, to find large numbers of 'general labourers,' which means too frequently 'casual labourers,' among those in distress, and actually we do find an overwhelming proportion. An examination of the returns made by the unemployed as regards their

occupations (which are no doubt occasionally misleading, and result in a certain confusion of skilled with unskilled) reveals, as will be seen, that a preponderating proportion of these persons are unskilled :—

Trade.	Total all Lancashire Labour Exchanges (Nov., 1908).	Total all Lancashire Distress Committees (Nov., 1908.).	Ancoats Census (Nov., 1908).
Building trade artisans ...	422 ...	408 ...	7
Other artisans	— ...	1,754 ...	51
Engineering and metal trades	911 ...		
Carters, horsekeepers, &c.	549 ...	979 ...	19
Clerks, warehousemen, &c.	322 ...	420 ...	2
Porters, messengers, &c....	411 ...	* ...	—
Woodworking and furnishing trades	148 ...	† ...	—
Printing and bookbinding	13 ...	† ...	—
Clothing trades	48 ...	† ...	—
Factory operatives	92 ...	‡192 ...	2
General labourers	4,689 ...	10,667 ...	63
Other occupations	339 ...	134 ...	62

* See "Labourers." † See "Other Artisans." ‡ Only four committees enter cotton operatives separately.

The Manchester census of March 3rd, 1909, yields the following results, as regards trades or occupations of the unemployed :—

Building Trades (skilled workers)	1,596
Engineering and Metal Trades (skilled workers)	3,342
Woodworking and Furniture Trades ,, ,,	664
Printing Trades (skilled workers)...	163
Carters and Horsekeepers	988
Clerks, Shop-assistants, Warehousemen, Porters, and Messengers	1,862
Clothing Trades	397
Factory Operatives	109
Bleachers, Dyers, and Chemical Workers... ...	249
Labourers	4,779
Other occupations	1,746

Other investigations have brought out exactly the same result. There can be no doubt but that a large fraction of the problem of unemployment is the problem of unskilled and casual labour. The labourer in this class has to offer merely the general value of labour. He seldom or never acquires a special value to a particular firm through long connection with it, as the skilled workman so frequently does. The unskilled man can, therefore, be dismissed without his employer's incurring any special loss, as soon as demand shrinks. It is not worth while, from the purely productive point of view, to make arrangements for retaining his connection with the firm during the slackness. In not a few cases, too, the opportunity is seized to get rid of many of these men, who are not very efficient, the employer hoping against hope to get a better lot next time.

The last feature to be noted of the returns analysed by us restores some brightness to the outlook. Of the cases examined by us on the Manchester Labour Exchange 97 per cent. were marked "strong and active" by the entry clerk, 1 per cent. " fairly strong and active," and 2 per cent. either " not strong " or suffering from some bodily defect; while of those who applied for distress work in Salford 99 per cent. were marked as " fit for work on the land."

We had hoped to be able to give an analysis of the causes from which the unemployment recorded by exchanges or distress committees had arisen, but the only data consisted in the answers of the men themselves when questioned on the point, and we find that in very few cases has any other answer then " slackness " or " job finished " been given as the cause. As it has not been possible to verify these answers by direct enquiry we feel them to be valueless for our purpose. However, it happens that the London Exchanges have made a special inquiry into this matter. Record papers

of 540 persons were taken haphazard from those extending over the whole season. Of these 540, 159 or 29·4 per cent. were found to have been weekly wage-earners—the remaining 70·6 per cent. were casual daily labourers. Each of the 159 men was given a good character by his employer, who in addition was generally found willing to re-engage the man when he had again sufficient work in hand to allow him to do so. The reasons for dismissal of these 159 men are stated in the table below.

Cause of Leaving.	Number.	Per Cent.
Slackness	58	36·5
Introduction of Machinery	8	5·0
Bankruptcy of Employer	11	6·9
Illness	12	7·5
Staff changes	11	6·9
Own accord	3	1·9
Disputes and disagreements	8	5·0
Lost time	1	—
Incompetence	4	2·5
Bad marks	13	8·2
To better himself	2	1·3
Shortening hands	4	2·5
Reason unknown	4	2·5
Death of employer	1	—
Job finished	14	8·8
Accident	2	1·3
Unhealthy occupation	1	—
Miscellaneous	2	—
	159	

CHAPTER VI.

Unemployment Among Women.

Not a few of those who are concerned about the extent of unemployment omit to devote any special attention to its incidence among women and are apt to think of unemployment among women as entirely of a piece with unemployment among men. Much, however, of the problem of unemployment which relates to women presents certain characteristics of its own, and it must not be forgotten that the women workers of the country constitute to-day an immense industrial army. Lancashire at least cannot be blind to the condition of women-workers in times of bad trade, since in the industry peculiarly associated with the county the adult women workers, that is, those above the age of young persons, amounted in 1901 to no less than 237,000 as contrasted with 143,000 adult males. Nor does this large body exhaust, or approximately exhaust, the numbers of women in our immediate vicinity who are in danger of losing their means of livelihood when a collapse of demand is experienced. Many of them, too, are as much dependent upon their earnings as men.

The extent of unemployment among women is far more difficult to gauge than that among men, for reasons which no research is needed to lay bare. More women than men have other means of support upon which they can fall back when employment is slack. In some cases, again, no particular distress is occasioned by the temporary suspension of their earning power, and they can afford to wait patiently for the recovery of trade. This is true, as a rule, of the wives of men in regular

employment and of daughters who do or could live at home. By such workers short-time unemployment, and even complete unemployment if it does not continue too long, are welcomed not infrequently as opportunities for much-needed rest or a long-desired holiday. One difficulty about women's industrial work is that usually the worker has to choose between toiling longer and harder each day than she would like or being entirely without work. It is comprehensible, therefore, that slackness of employment comes as a relief to many women engaged in factories and workshops. They retire wearily to their homes to recuperate, and are consequently overlooked when attempts to find out the number of women unemployed are being made, unless the inquiry takes the form of a census.

According to the Manchester census of March 3rd, 1909, some 2,650 women were out of work, all but 550 being over 18. That is to say nearly 3 per cent. of the occupied women of Manchester over 14 were out of work, or 2·6 of the same over 18. Some 660 were widows and 420 married with husbands living. Only 23 belonged to trade unions and all but 57 had resided in Manchester more than twelve months. About 450 of the total were still partially or casually employed. Over 200 declared themselves to be suffering from some bodily infirmity or to be in some way disabled from working, and only about one-fifth of the 2,650 would seem to have belonged to Provident, Friendly, Co-operative, or Insurance societies.

The Ancoats census showed that 37 women and girls were unemployed out of a population of 6,300, of whom 3,700 were adults, but it is not known how many of the women were employees.

There are, needless to say, many women who are reduced to great distress almost instantly by loss of work. These are the women supporting themselves who have, in addition, others dependent upon them. The wages of

women are low as a rule, and they cannot therefore bear for long a suspension of earnings if the claims upon them are heavy. Nevertheless they are even more reluctant than men to register themselves with labour exchanges and distress committees. The reason for this aversion is easily understood; it has already been explained in a previous chapter.

A great deal of distress has been caused by the reaction of industrial depression on the demand for the casual labour of women. In some places the demand for charwomen has completely collapsed. The explanation, of course, is that unemployment among men means less money for domestic help, and that unemployed women can do their domestic work for themselves. Charing, it must be remembered, is a regular profession, embracing large numbers in towns in which women are engaged industrially in large numbers. The charwoman is a peripatetic housekeeper, and commonly she has her weekly round. The work is very suitable for women who, though they cannot be away from their homes day after day without a break, have some time to spare from home duties or are urgently in need of a few shillings more a week to supplement the family income. A shrinkage of the demand for charwomen is so serious because so many of them have husbands whose earnings are low or intermittent, and who are commonly among the first to lose their work when trade gets bad. The fall in the demand for charwomen comes, therefore, just at the time when it can be borne least easily. There are thousands of distressing cases caused by the slackness of employment among women in Lancashire. The reason why some of the men who are now being found work by distress committees are being helped is not, we have discovered on inquiry, that they are themselves deserving of special consideration, but that wives or daughters who have been the mainstays of the homes, which they have striven pertinaciously to keep together,

have lost their occupations through no faults of their own.

There are no grounds for supposing that the unemployment of trade unionists is less or more severe among women than among men. The following are the figures of unemployment among women, who are almost entirely non-unionists, returned by the Lancashire distress committees and labour registries for November, 1908:—

	Warrington		Manchester		Liverpool Women and Girls
	Women	Girls	Women	Girls	
Individuals found work ...	7	12 ...	80	16 ...	8
On register at end of month	96	31 ...	623	32 ...	184

The Exchange for Women in Salford was not opened till the end of November. Observe that the numbers for Manchester are less than one-quarter of the numbers discovered to be out of work by the Manchester census three months later when employment was certainly no worse.

Taking the returns for the women's bureaux in various parts of the country which were opened before October, 1908, (three in London and one each in Dublin, Liverpool, Manchester, Watford, Edinburgh, and Glasgow) we find that during November 987 fresh applicants were registered, of whom no less than 570 had been in domestic occupations. The number of situations offered by employers was 637, and it is especially noteworthy that only 250 of these were filled. Of these 250, 152 were for domestic servants, nurses, working housekeepers and mothers' helps. Two hundred and three of the 250 situations were of a permanent character.

The demand for cooks and parlour-maids was actually in excess of the supply, though the period was one of acute unemployment. On examining the monthly returns throughout 1908 we find that for all kinds of domestic servants the situations offered were uniformly

in excess of the applications from January to September, but from September onwards the latter exceeded the former. This change is caused not only by a lessened demand on the part of employers, but also by the fact that a number of women when thrown out of work by the state of trade turn to domestic service as a means of tiding them over the period of depression.

The work done in November, 1908, and February, 1909, by the nine bureaux mentioned compared with that done in the corresponding months of the previous years, as well as the occupations of the applicants, is shown in the following table:—

Occupation	Applications by workpeople during				Situations offered by employers during				Numbers of workpeople engaged by employers Permanently				Temporarily			
	Nov. 1908	Nov. 1907	Feb. 1909	Feb. 1908	Nov. 1908	Nov. 1907	Feb. 1909	Feb. 1908	Nov. 1908	Nov. 1907	Feb. 1909	Feb. 1908	Nov. 1908	Nov. 1907	Feb. 1909	Feb. 1908
Superintendents, forewomen, &c.	56	60	64	92	20	21	24	30	9	3	8	6	0	1	0	1
Shop assistants...	22	21	30	20	10	10	5	3	3	3	3	1	1	1	0	0
Dressmakers, milliners, &c....	83	69	97	91	42	40	64	64	21	12	25	36	9	18	13	4
Secretaries, clerks, typists ..	130	70	103	76	25	37	19	27	17	7	9	10	9	16	4	3
Apprentices and learners	17	11	11	8	19	11	23	34	15	20	14	10	1	0	0	1
Domestic servants	570	426	513	472	473	428	540	581	127	82	100	114	25	32	26	26
Miscellaneous ...	107	190	157	163	48	88	47	91	11	23	16	26	2	6	6	7
Total of nine Bureaux	987	847	975	922	637	635	722	830	203	150	184	203	47	74	49	42

(The figures for February relate to ten Bureaux.)

These figures, for reasons stated in this chapter and in previous chapters, do not nearly represent the full extent of the dearth of work, and some of the women, it must be remembered, do not ordinarily work for wages, but are now driven to it by the unemployment of the men on whom they are dependent. The proportion of domestic servants is remarkable in view of the alleged scarcity of domestic servants at the present time. The explanation consists largely in the inefficiency of those who have been without places for a long time, and the ignorance and unadaptibility of those intending to change their occupa-

tions temporarily or permanently. An investigation of the causes of unemployment cannot fail to strengthen the conviction that real efforts must be made by improved training to raise the efficiency of those who otherwise in the future will be always hovering on the verge of comparative uselessness, as so many are to-day, though they are suffering from no specific mental or physical defects. We have repeatedly met with the assertion that it is not in the higher branches that trades are crowded, not even in the trades of dressmaking, tailoring, and upholstery. As regards Liverpool, we have been informed that usually in most of the needle trades and in laundry work the unskilled branches are greatly overcrowded, but that there is plenty of room in the higher grades—*e.g.*, washerwomen are commonly abundant, but skilled ironers scarce. There is, moreover, said to be a chronic scarcity of women able to make really fine underlinen, though there is not sufficient work for those who offer themselves for the coarser work. We have no doubt that these conditions will be found repeated in broad outline in every place where women labour industrially. Continuation classes, conducted with a view to the further awakening of intelligence and to appropriate preparation for trades, we feel to be no less requisite for girls than for boys. When designed for girls, these classes should be specialised to their needs and include courses bearing on domestic economy.

According to the Manchester census of March 3rd, 1909, the trades or occupations of women out of work were as follows:—

Domestic, Hotel and Restaurant Servants	408
Clothing Trades	395
Clerks and Shop Assistants	149
Printing Trades	89
Factory Operatives	509
Laundry Workers and Charwomen... ...	577
Other occupations	262

All did not state how long they had been out of work, but of those who did the duration of unemployment is set forth beneath :—

Under 1 month	101
1 month to 3 months...	322
3 months to 6 months...	506
6 ,, ,, 9 ,, ...	458
9 ,, ,,12 ,, ...	633

The age distribution of unemployed women taken by us from the records of the Manchester Exchange is as follows :—

Age-groups	Percentages of women engaged in occupations in each age-group (Lancashire census returns)	Percentages of unemployed women in each age-group for year ending September, 1908	Percentages of unemployed women in each age-group November, 1908
Under 25 years ...	51·3	17·5	21·7
25 to 35 years ...	23·2	26·4	22·9
35 to 45 years ...	12·4	32·2	25·6
45 to 55 years ...	7·5	18·8	20·5
55 to 75 years ...	5·6	5·1	9·3

The proportion of women and girls under 25 years of age unemployed is much less than their proportion in the "occupied" population below that age. The explanation may be partly that many of the young persons unemployed, having other means of support which will suffice for the time, do not register in large numbers. This interpretation is borne out by the fact that 15 out of the 37 unemployed women revealed by the Ancoats census were under 21, and also by the results of the Manchester census which are as follows, as contrasted with the age-distribution of occupied women in Lancashire :—

	Percentages	
	Women engaged in occupations in Lancashire in each age-group.	Unemployed women (shown by Manchester Census) in each age-group.
14 to 25	51·3	50·4
25 to 35	23·2	17·2
35 to 45	12·4	15·6
45 to 55	7·5	13·2
55 to 75	5·6	9·2

It has been a difficult matter for distress committees to find satisfactory work for unemployed women. Women cannot do the kind of work which it is easiest for local authorities to provide, as it is mainly heavy work done in the open air. Sewing-rooms have been opened, but our inquiries show that the value of the output is usually far beneath the wages paid, though we have heard little complaint of unwillingness or of a disposition to shirk. The high cost of sewing work so conducted is comprehensible when we remember that most of the women have had little practice and that the mechanical aids utilised must be inferior to those applied in the production of similar articles under the direction of private enterprise. We have, however, met with instances in which there has been no appreciable loss, no doubt on account of the kind of work chosen. All our informants agree that many of the women benefit greatly from the training which they get in the sewing-room.

CHAPTER VII.

Unemployment Cycles.

The causes of unemployment may be broadly divided into two classes, the external and the internal, or the economic and the personal. The economic consist in (*a*) certain industrial changes consequent upon alterations in demand or in methods of production, or upon alterations in the relative magnitudes of different lines of trade, (*b*) the rhythmical fluctuations between good and bad trade generally to which modern industrial communities are subject, and (*c*) seasonal oscillations. Of these causes the rhythmical fluctuations are no doubt the most serious. They periodically bring about widespread distress. Invariably, too, they burst on the community with a certain unexpectedness, since the intervals between them are comparatively lengthy and, within limits, of varied duration. Seasonality, in being more regular, less lasting and more frequent can be met with far less strain.

That trade varies from briskness to slackness in wave lengths revealing a certain uniformity, needs no proof to the business world; but a few words must be said of the origin of the trade cycle if we are to understand the unemployment resulting from it. The periodicity of the waves of good and bad trade cannot be explained by reference to the accidental incidents, stimulating or the reverse, which bear from time to time upon trade and industry, unless their comparative regularity of occurrence can be proved, as it has not been yet. The most plausible account of the trade cycle finds the prime source in the psychology of communities and the degree

in which modern industry must be directed by the anticipation of competing dealers and manufacturers. Unreasonable expectations are generated by success, and many of those who are not deceived by the signs of the times speculate in the rashness of others. When a community is in a sanguine state of mind only stimulating incidents meet with appropriate responses. Overtrading thus partly creates itself, and is partly created by external forces. In certain mental states we can read only favourable signs. After a collapse the community suffers from nervous shock and refuses to receive favourable impressions. A certain period of rest is required for enterprise to recover from its paralysis, as well as for the stocks which have resulted from false anticipation to be worked off. Thus the degree of regularity characterising the trade cycle is to some extent a reflection of a business community's power of recovery. The time needed depends, of course, upon the magnitude of the collapse and the nature of external circumstances; hence the degree of irregularity. In view of the admitted facts of imitation and communication of states of mind, and of the interdependence of businesses, the synchronism of depression or briskness in the several industries of a community needs no examination. It scarcely need be pointed out that depression in one country might be due entirely to over-trading in quite another country, and that depression so brought about by outside forces might be unaccompanied by enfeebled initiative.

The causes of the trade cycle are obscure, and it is not our intention in this essay to be drawn into recondite discussions as to the exact essentials of these causes, and the relations between them. It will be sufficient for our purpose if the general periodicity of these trade fluctuations be admitted, and also that they reveal neither the ruling of a mechanical necessity nor independence of volitional action. All persons, we think, whatever their

views as to the fundamental causes of trade cycles, will agree upon these points.

The existing state of stagnation stands out from ordinary periods of bad trade in presenting certain abnormal features. The previous prosperity had been remarkably long, if a premature spasm of reaction in 1901, not unconnected with the South African War, be overlooked. The years 1897 and 1907 are roughly the limits of this striking period, which may be regarded either as two short cycles divided by a slight depression or as one long cycle containing a sub-cycle within it. For the peculiarity of the decade 1897–1907 sufficient reasons can be assigned, of which the long-drawn-out antecedent sluggishness is not the least. Examination of trade cycles suggests the generalisation that the duration of good times is a function of the duration of the antecedent bad times. Hence a lengthy period of good trade might have been foretold in 1897 with some confidence, and also its culmination in an unusually severe collapse—for, as a rule, the longer the period of good trade the worse the collapse. The longer the period of good trade the further is forward buying drawn out and the more involved do traders become. If normally the rule is to buy in October for January deliveries, towards the end of a period of good trade dealers will be buying for January deliveries, say, in July, under the pressure of demands crowding in the face of only slightly elastic production. Should briskness still continue, seven months' forward buyings will take the place of six months' forward buyings, and so on. Hence when the wave of prosperity breaks far-reaching false anticipation is discovered if good trade has lasted an unusually long time. The more complete the trade subsidence the worse, of course, is the state of employment; and there are special reasons in addition why employment should be worse after a long stretch of prosperity. The pressure of demand on production during the prosperity

may have forced the adoption of labour-saving devices, and the effect of these on the demand for labour is felt most when the demand shrinks. Of course, the advance in productiveness implied is all to the good in the long run, but at first it means more unemployment than there would have been otherwise. Again, when it becomes economical to shift works, or shut up some and enlarge others which are perhaps in another district, the change is naturally made in times of slackness. We have found many instances of this being done.

Serious unemployment might, therefore, have been foretold for the end of 1908, or thereabouts, had other conditions not been out of the ordinary. But other conditions were out of the ordinary. In the first place, the organisation of finance for industrial enterprise had been rapidly developing in the United States, and this had meant much unsound industrial investment which in an earlier period could not have been effected. This large-scale industrial financing is the most outstanding factor in recent economic evolution. For a long time productive enterprise has been curbed by the great difficulty of procuring capital for industrial undertakings. Capital is drawn easily from the public for trading (through the avenue of banks, who use their deposits largely for the discounting of bills and for short-period overdrafts), but not so easily for industry. American ingenuity has of late devoted itself to facilitating the transfer of capital from the public to industry. That wild speculation and some dishonesty have accompanied a revolution in finance is not to be wondered at, human nature—and particularly American human nature—being what it is. It is not remarkable, then, that the crisis in the United States last autumn was one of the most severe of the century; the remarkable thing is the rapid recovery. And to-day no country can keep its disasters to itself.

The trade cycle means economic waste, and periodically

it creates considerable distress. The wise prepare for the days of scarcity, knowing that they are coming; but all are not provident, and even if they were the economic waste involved in spasmodic production would remain. False estimates of future demand must frequently be made, but there is no reason in the nature of things why they should not be distributed according to the law of error instead of in this cyclical way, and why trade depression should have such far-reaching effects. The causes of the trade cycle being so largely psychological, there is ground for the hope that the cyclical movement in business will become less and less marked. Already many think they see signs of a smoothing out of trade; for the recent excessive over-trading and depression there are, we have seen, special reasons. And it appears to us, after our inquiries, that trade depression probably occasions now less widespread paralysis of production than it used to do. We have noticed in a previous chapter the occasional pursuit of the policy of renewing plant in times of depression and embarking on extensions of works; which is all to the good, for not only does it afford employment, but also, by rendering certain trades prosperous, it breaks the uniformity of depression, and therefore tends to dissipate it. It is worth the while of organised labour to consider whether they might not encourage this policy by arranging for more elastic wages, which at the same time would operate directly as a deterrent to over-trading as the resistance to unreasonable overtime certainly has operated. By elastic wages we mean wages varying rapidly in response to the state of trade. With this matter we have already dealt at length in our second Chapter. Our hopeful reading of the signs of the times has been strengthened by conversations held with business men of many different professions. What is particularly noticeable in this depression would seem to be the general spirit of confidence that trade will soon recover.

Unfortunately certain special circumstances, productive of unemployment generally or in particular trades, have been associated with the recent collapse of trade or have synchronised with it. Some we have noticed in a previous chapter; another circumstance just worth notice is a comparative failure in certain harvests. The world's wheat crops from 1899 to 1908 were approximately, in millions of quarters, 328, 333, 348, 394, 404, 366, 402, 411, 363, and 387. The figure 363 for 1907 is appreciably below the average. Again, there has been a serious fall in the value of silver. This has naturally produced in the East (exclusive of India with its restricted mintage), but in a slighter degree, the effects which gave rise some years ago to the bimetallic agitation. The price of silver fell from $33\frac{1}{8}$d. per ounce, the maximum of 1906 reached in November, to $25\frac{9}{16}$d. at the end of January, 1907, $24\frac{5}{16}$d. at the end of April, $23\frac{5}{8}$d. in August, $23\frac{1}{4}$d. in October, and $22\frac{5}{16}$d. at the end of November, 1907. This in itself was calculated to curtail our trade with China, and its effect was intensified by the general over-trading which had taken place in that country, and by anxiety and unrest caused by the change of rulers in Pekin. We have been informed, however, that the impression in China now is that an era of reform and development may be looked for. From the reports of Shanghai correspondents which we have been permitted to see we gather that China is suffering greatly at present from a debased copper currency and from prohibitive rates of interest among natives consequent upon the absence of confidence in banking and commercial circles caused by recent heavy losses in trade. Exchanges with Shanghai dropped from a general level of 3s. in 1906 to 2s. $6\frac{3}{8}$d. at the end of January, 1907, 2s. $5\frac{5}{8}$d. in April, 2s. $4\frac{1}{8}$d. in August, 2s. $3\frac{3}{4}$d. in October, and 2s. $2\frac{7}{8}$d. at the end of November, 1907. The reflexion in trade is apparent from the following table of exports of produce and manufactures of the United Kingdom. It will be

seen that the percentage collapse of our trade with China far exceeds the average shrinkage of trade:—

(000 omitted.)

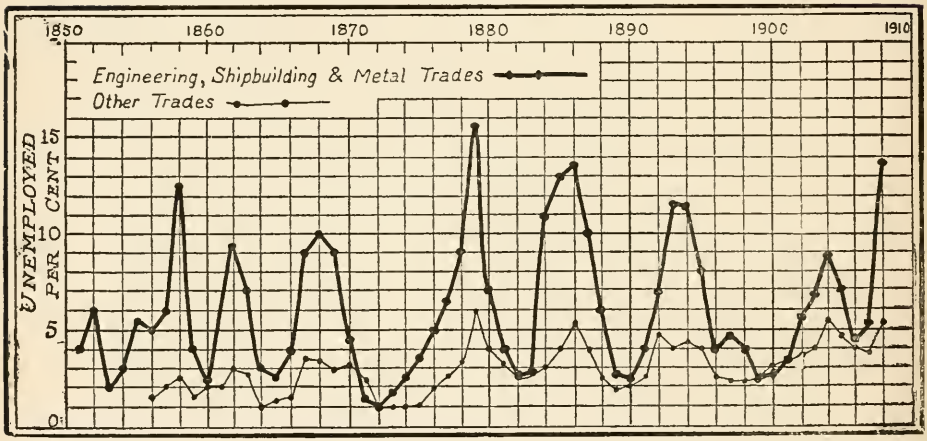
Year	*a* China		British India		All Countries	
	b Cotton goods only £	All commodities £	*b* Cotton goods only £	All commodities £	*b* Cotton goods only £	All commodities £
1905	10,503	16,854	24,338	42,996	81,140	329,817
1906	9,500	15,265	24,558	45,181	87,208	375,575
1907	9,243	15,259	27,206	52,104	96,466	426,035
1908	7,516	12,123	25,013	49,464	83,095	377,220
1908:						
Jan. ...	868	—	2,632	—	8,565	34,408
May ...	687	—	1,934	—	6,847	31,067
Sept. ...	548	—	2,205	—	6,631	31,621
Dec. ...	498	—	1,379	—	5,715	29,402

a Includes Hong Kong.
b Yarn and all kinds of piece goods only.

We shall now contrast the state of employment to-day with its state in past periods of bad trade. The only satisfactory index of employment which can be used consists in the trade-union returns; it is far from perfect, as we observed in Chapter II., but in the absence of a more correct index it must serve. On page 100 is a diagram showing the cyclical movement of these percentages.

In the table that follows we have supplemented the trade union returns with the numbers per 1,000 in receipt of poor relief in England and Wales, but these figures may be very misleading. The numbers of those who come upon the poor rates depend, of course, to a large extent upon the administrative policy prevailing at the time, and also upon the extent of other provisions for the relief of distress occasioned by unemployment, which vary considerably. For each year we have averaged the returns for 1st July of that year and 1st January of the following year and taken the

difference between these averages and the average of similar averages for the three preceding years of good trade. The state of trade may be regarded as roughly measured by imports and exports per head, and by movements in general prices apart from the influence of variations in supplies of bullion. We shall use both these measurements (which are not the only ones, though the best for our purpose) in order to avoid as far as possible the risk of being deceived by the effects of accidental variations in the standard of measurement. Movements in general prices are shown by index



numbers of prices, which may be interpreted for our purpose as averages of the prices of a group of commodities which may be taken as typical of commodities as a whole. Now index numbers of prices make it plain that the general level about which prices fluctuate according to the state of trade has moved considerably from time to time in consequence of variations in supplies of bullion, of development of banking machinery, and of alterations in the output per head. In employing index numbers as a measure of changes in the state of trade we must eliminate these movements from one level to

another. Sauerbeck gives with his graph of index numbers a freehand curve which may be broadly regarded as representing these movements from one level to another. We have selected Sauerbeck's index numbers because he has supplemented them with such a curve. The differences between the freehand curve and the graph of the actual index numbers may clearly be read as rough indications of the oscillations in prices due to the state of trade. As regards foreign trade, the normal level is taken as the average of the three years before the depression. The figures for the years 1903–5 in the last column of our table will seem peculiar. The explanation is that foreign trade was moving on to a higher level from 1902 onwards, and the slight depression is consequently marked by an oscillation about a rising curve. Bad trade in 1903–5 did not extend to all branches of production; our cotton industry was one of the branches which escaped:—

Year.	A	B	C	D	E
					£
1878	6·8	3·5	+0·5	−2	−1·32
1879	11·4	6·1	+0·9	−5	−1·58
1880	5·5	3·8	+0·35	+4	+0·75
1884	8·1	3·5	−0·2	−1	−1·12
1885	9·3	4·2	−0·1	−4	−2·48
1886	10·2	5·6	−0·05	−4	−3·28
1887	7·6	3·9	−0·10	−4	−2·74
1892	6·05	2·7	+0·23	−1	−1·12
1893	7·5	4·7	+0·38	−0	−2·15
1894	6·9	4·0	+0·33	−3	−2·30
1895	5·8	4·2	+0·28	−3	−1·93
1903	5·1	3·7	+0·18	−3	+0·25
1904	6·5	4·0	+0·53	−3	+0·49
1905	5·4	4·8	+0·48	−1	+1·44
1908	8·1	5·3	—	−2	−0·89

A.—Percentage of unemployment for all unions.
B.—Percentage of unemployment for unions other than ship-building, engineering, and metal trades.
C.—Difference between number of "able-bodied" relieved and average of previous three years per 1,000 of population.
D.—Percentage variation in prices due to state of trade.
E.—Difference between trade per head of population and average of previous period of three years.

We observe that the percentage of unemployment was higher in 1879, 1885, and 1886 than in 1908, and that for unions other than those in ship-building and engineering employment was worse in 1879 and 1886 than in 1908. However, it would not seem from the indices of prices and foreign trade in the last two columns that the average state of trade was so bad in 1908 as in 1879, 1885, or 1886. The explanation may be, of course, that the comparatively good early months of 1908 make the indices for that year deceptive. The judgment that 1879 was a peculiarly disastrous year is borne out also by the evidence of the figures of poor relief.

No social thinker with any sense of proportion will under-rate the serious consequences, particularly to the wage-earning classes, of these cyclical fluctuations of trade. They undoubtedly constitute one of the gravest and most damaging defects of modern business. The defect being admitted, we shall argue that perfection cannot reasonably be looked for in the individual's attitude towards it. No doubt the individual ought to save against the risk of bad luck when trade is bad; but, on the other hand, the bad trade ought not to be there. That is to say, it would not be there in the ideal world, and in no other world can ideal individual action be looked for. There is obviously an obligation upon the community to repair any glaring defects in its system,

so far as that be possible, or to mitigate, in the wisest manner possible, their incidence on those members of the community who suffer from them most. It is worth while, however, to glance at the other side of the shield and observe that normally, society does succeed in a truly remarkable manner in organising itself for the production of the things which it is going to need when they are made. The miracle is not the temporary dislocation but the extraordinary regularity of employment, when trade is not passing through one of these periodic disturbances, in view of the irregularity of much demand, of the sudden changes to which it is subject, and of the fact that production is based on anticipation of wants.

Still a flaw in our organisation, which repeatedly creates for remedy social troubles of the first magnitude, cannot be represented as other than a flaw. We have, however, seen reason to believe that society may grow out of this recurrent liability to lapse into disorganisation; and the good and the bad in a system must, of course, always be viewed together before judgment can be passed on the whole. It is some consolation to assure ourselves that the power to withstand the periodic assaults of depression is improving. Since 1840 money wages have risen in all trades, in some, of course, more than in others. The average rise, each trade being reckoned as of equal account, cannot be much less than 70 per cent. And allowance being made for the movement of the population into the better paid callings, we get a rise of about 100 per cent. in average wages, according to Professor Bowley's calculations. This rise has, of course, taken place at different rates in different periods, but, apart from cyclical relapses, it has been continuous. And in addition the purchasing power of money has probably risen by about 25 per cent. in the same period according to the various investigations which have been made, some

of them being based on retail prices in shops where the wage-earners deal and on the proportionate expenditure of income for different purposes which is usual among working-class families.

The improvement in the last few years will be, no doubt, of more interest to this generation than the improvement over a longer period. Comparing 1882 and 1902, Mr. Bowley concludes that the average of wages in different trades advanced 15 per cent., and that average earnings, the transference of labour to better paid callings being taken into account, advanced 30 per cent. Moreover, if we draw up a budget of the typical expenditure of a wage-earning family which would have absorbed 20/- in 1898—1902, we find that the things included would have cost 19/6 in 1893–5, 20/6 in 1888–92, and 21/6 in 1883–7. There has, therefore, been a fall in retail prices, or rise in the purchasing power of money, of 8 per cent. The increase in real wages between 1882 and 1902, therefore, approaches 40 per cent. And irregularity in employment is certainly getting no worse. Periods of slackness in employment are neither more frequent, nor more intense, nor more lasting. Indeed we have seen reason to suppose that forces are operating which tend to reduce fluctuations in employment in extent and duration. But nothing more than the tendency can be affirmed as yet.

CHAPTER VIII.

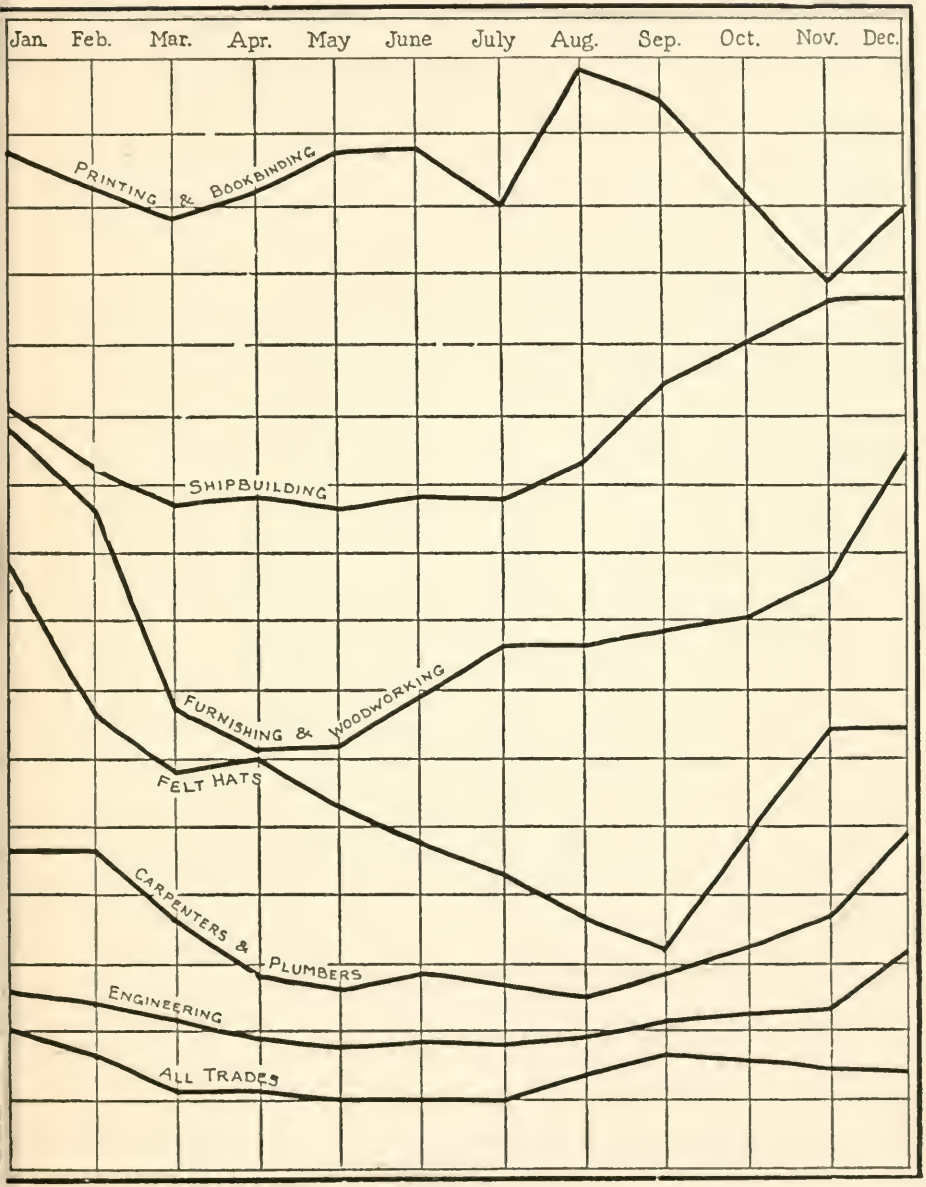
Seasonality and Insurance.

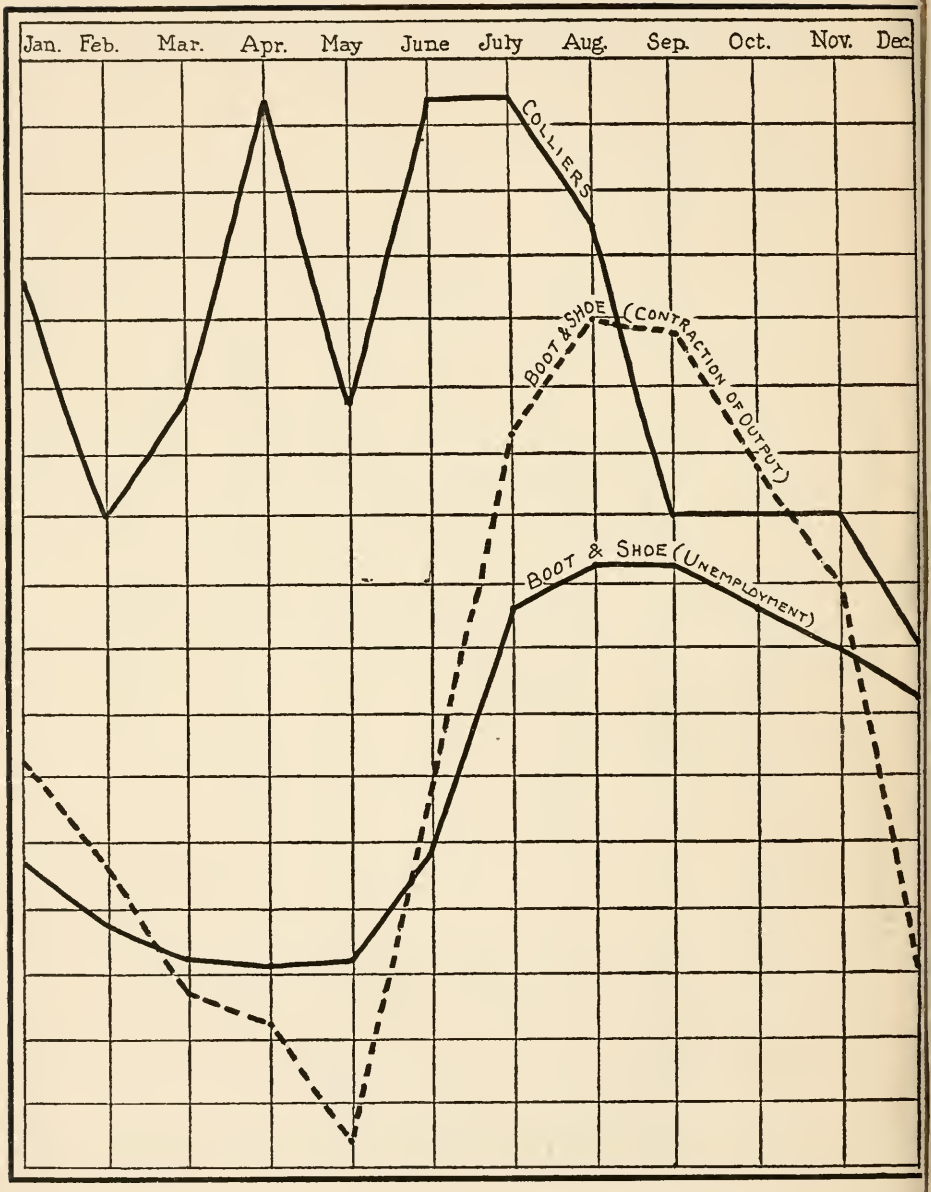
Seasonality may affect employment from the side of demand or the side of supply. Work in connection with harvests, including the handling of imported crops, must be seasonal, and also work which cannot be conducted in certain sorts of weather peculiar to a particular time of the year. These are examples of seasonality arising from the side of supply. For the periodic unemployment associated with it there is no effective cure, but there is always the chance of suitable by-employments being found for the temporarily unemployed labour. Numerous instances might be cited of labourers' having to-day different occupations at different times of the year. Were the country provided with a thoroughly exhaustive system of registration of the demand for labour in labour exchanges, subsidiary occupations would be more easily and rapidly discovered for those whose primary work is of a broken character. The other kind of seasonality, that emanating from demand, is getting distinctly weaker in certain branches of industry. This kind of seasonality, too, may be dependent upon climate changes—*e.g.*, the demand for coal for domestic purposes, for furs, and for summer clothing—or it may result from sheer caprice. In so far as it is capricious it may be expected to weaken; and, as regards seasonal demand which has a rational foundation, we should observe that periodic buying does not necessitate spasmodic production when the articles produced are not perishables. Thus summer fabrics may be made in the winter and even bought in the winter. The growth of fixed capital in proportion to population

is constantly adding to the cost of irregular production as contrasted with steady production, for irregular production means expensive machinery standing idle. Coal being comparatively a perishable, the output for domestic use must be varied with the state of the weather.

In the two following diagrams illustrations are furnished of the extent of seasonality. All the graphs in the first diagram represent variations in the trade-union returns of percentage of unemployment. They are based on ten yearly averages, except the graph for felt hat makers, which refers to 1906, a year in which the seasonality of the trade was broadly typical. The ascent of a graph means increasing unemployment. In both diagrams the distances between the horizontal lines mean quantities of 1 per cent. The graphs are ranged one above another merely to avoid the confusion caused by intersections.

The graphs relating to unemployment in the second diagram are not based upon trade-union returns. They must not therefore be compared with the graphs in the first diagram. The graph relating to colliers gives percentage variations of time worked per week from the normal working week, according to a ten-yearly average, ascents indicating shrinkage of work. Two graphs are given for the boot and shoe trades—the broken line shows the contraction of output due to trade depression (contraction is represented by ascent of the graph) and is based on total wages paid in 1906; the continuous line, calculated from employers' returns, shows the percentage variations in number of workpeople employed. The interest of these two curves taken together is in the indication afforded by them of the degree in which seasonal slackness is met by dismissal of hands. Apparently about half the slackness is met by short time. The various arrangements made to reduce work in times of depression are fully examined in Chapter III.


Jan.
Feb.
Mar.
Apr.
May
June
July
Aug.
Sep.
Oct.
Nov.
Dec.
PRINTING & BOOKBINDING
SHIPBUILDING
FURNISHING & WOODWORKING
FELT HATS
CARPENTERS & PLUMBERS
ENGINEERING
ALL TRADES


Jan.
Feb.
Mar.
Apr.
May
June
July
Aug.
Sep.
Oct.
Nov.
Dec.
COLLIERS
BOOT & SHOE (CONTRACTION OF OUTPUT)
BOOT & SHOE (UNEMPLOYMENT)

August, it will be observed, is the worst month in the printing trades. The worst time for colliers naturally falls also in the summer. The felt hat makers seem to manufacture for the winter in the summer, though there seems no reason why seasonal movements should not be avoided altogether in this trade and in the boot and shoe trade. The seasonal movement in employment in the furnishing and woodworking trades is equally remarkable, though sawyers are included.

As insurance against unemployment has been advocated largely with a view to seasonal unemployment, we shall consider its possibilities now, though it must be borne in mind that the unemployment caused by cyclical trade depression is not outside its scope. In these days when we insure against most of the accidents of life—death, sickness and disablement, bad debts, fire and shipwreck, variations in prices (by "futures" and "options"), burglary, damage to valuables, and destruction of crops—it is only to be expected that insurance should be thought of as a possible means of mitigating the distress occasioned by the accident of unemployment. Indeed, insurance of a variety of kinds has actually been tried. But it has frequently been urged against it that unemployment is not an insurable risk. The two main grounds for this contention are—the one that the payment of benefits to those out of work operates as an appreciable inducement to half-heartedness in seeking and keeping work; the other that, the risk of unemployment not being distributed according to the law of error, a simple system of premiums would not impose substantially equitable burdens. The first objection seems to us the least weighty and by no means fatal if the benefits are not high, and particularly if an efficient national system of labour exchanges is in operation, in some manner of association with which the insurance scheme could be administered. Arrangements would, of course, have to be made limiting the duration of benefits in

proportion to premiums paid. Trade unions, particularly those of the United Kingdom, have been most successful in insuring their members against unemployment. The cost in this country, apart from administration expenses, ranges up to about 7d. a week. It must be realised, however, that the trade unions are in an exceptionally advantageous position for performing such a function. They operate as employment agencies, and insist on their members accepting suitable work and proving themselves reasonably capable of keeping their places. All will agree upon the enormous importance of extending insurance upon the basis of labour organisations.

The second objection to public insurance against unemployment, namely, that the risk of unemployment is not sporadically dispersed, is more serious. The risk of unemployment varies with (1) the trade, (2) the efficiency of the individual, and (3) such moral qualities in the individual as industry and tractability. It will be apparent from our previous chapters how enormous are the discrepancies between the risks of unemployment in different trades; we may cite in particular the very heavy cyclical risks in ship-building and seasonal risks in coal-mining. In some industries, again, slackness of work is spread over the bulk of the labour in the trade in the form of short time, whereas in others it shows itself mainly in dismissal of hands. This divergence in the form of unemployment might necessitate arrangements under which small benefits would be paid to those whose work was reduced by a percentage above a certain amount, and the benefits would rise as the duration of employment fell, until they reached the maximum when unemployment was complete. Perhaps it would not be impossible to group premiums by trades according to their unemployment risks, but there would still remain the discrepancies between the risks of individuals consequent upon differences in employability. Were a voluntary system of insurance adopted it is probable

that the more responsible, adaptable, industrious, and obliging hands would discover at some time, if they did not realise at once, that their premiums were in excess of their benefits, and would in consequence leave insurance severely alone. Premiums for the remainder would then, no doubt, be found prohibitive. Our examination of the quality of labour seeking assistance at labour exchanges and offices for registering for relief work leads us to suppose that this objection is far from being negligible. The least efficient need the insurance most, and they are least capable of bearing the cost, which would be high for their cases separated from the rest. It is a general principle in business, of course, to dismiss first the hands of the lowest value. The problem would be simplified if a hard-and-fast line could be drawn between the employable and the unemployable, but it cannot. What we have to deal with is a population the economic value of the members of which ranges from something in the neighbourhood of zero to a large amount. One way out of the difficulty would be to subsidise the insurance, premiums being calculated on the risks of the average workman in each trade. This would mean, in effect, payment by the public of a portion of the premiums of those below the average. In view of the nature of many of these, however, and of the fact that many of them are frequently out of work for a long time and that idleness is demoralising, it would seem more desirable to provide them with work and wages than with benefits merely.

In some degree, it may be urged, trade-union unemployed insurance is subject to the flaws pointed out above. This is true, but whether a flaw is fatal or not depends upon its magnitude and the means available for counteracting it. No system of any kind in the world is free from imperfection. The trade unions see to it that workmen on the verge of unemployment struggle to get a little higher up in the scale of employability, and that

no person draws an abnormal amount of out-of-work pay. Through their members they watch and influence their members, and thus their system is to some extent an individualising one. Such helpful individualised action is beyond the powers of a public body or insurance company. Again, the payment of unemployed benefit is regarded by the trade unions as an essential element in the policy directed to maintaining a standard rate. If it were not paid at times when the rate would naturally fall, those out of work by competing with those in work would bring the rate down.

The comparative triumphs of certain trade unions in insuring their members against unemployment induced the municipal authorities at Ghent to try the experiment of subsidising such trade-union insurance in 1901. By last winter every town in Belgium with a population of more than 40,000, and some provinces, had followed suit, and the Ghent scheme is now being tried experimentally with certain modifications in other Continental countries. One must not imagine from this that an extensive and costly system of subsidising insurance against unemployment is already in operation on the Continent; on the contrary the aggregate financial burden involved is still small. We must not ignore the possibility that under this scheme the public might be taxed to support an attempt by a trade union to maintain a certain standard wage which the state of the trade did not warrant. Its widespread adoption, however, would seem to be an indication that on the whole its merits must have been considerable. Side by side with the assistance of trade unionists some plan for extending similar aid to non-unionists is obviously desirable and has frequently had to be adopted. Frequently it takes the form of subsidising their withdrawals from savings when they are out of work, it being understood that no person receiving a subsidy may, under certain safeguards, refuse

suitable work. Certainly the plan of subsidising individual saving against want of work, the extent of saving being left to the individual, does evade the difficulty involved in an attempt to classify the risks of different classes of the community and calculate equitable premiums against them. An obvious imperfection in supplementary schemes of this nature, however, is that they do not rest on an insurance basis. The cost of the non-unionist unemployment is not spread over the whole trade. Consequently subsidies must be relatively enormous in some cases or the provision for temporary non-earners must be frequently inadequate. Whatever good points the Ghent plan has, it still leaves the bulk of the distress due to bad trade or seasonal collapses of demand untouched, in so far as the device for assisting non-unionists is on a voluntary basis. Trade unions do not nearly include the whole of the wage-earning population. The mass of those whose sufferings are the most acute are not in trade unions and do not save appreciably, if at all.

We have been asked what would happen if a trade which insured itself against unemployment rapidly contracted. Trades must now and then decline absolutely, and when they do the percentage of unemployment must become abnormal. We may observe, however, that most rates of decline that are likely in any trade can be adequately met by a shrinkage of the entries into the trade. It would seem that the rate at which an industry would shrink by retirement or death of its members, were the avenues to it entirely closed, could not normally be much less than 2 per cent. in the first year. This rate would, of course, rise with increasing rapidity from year to year, since the age-distribution of those left in the trade would become increasingly weighted with the greater ages. It would seem, then, that 'nature' in competitive economic arrangements has provided an automatic self-protective

function against rapid industrial changes. Were this natural rate of decline exceeded the burden on the insurance funds against unemployment would become serious. We can only suggest that a reserve should be held against such an eventuality; and, if feasible, that a pooled reserve for several labour organisations should be formed, as this would be the most economical system of making provision. Just as some federations of trade unions have held funds for use only in strikes of exceptional severity, so they might hold funds relating to friendly benefit against exceptional cases like the one supposed.

Though we are greatly impressed by the necessity of a further extension of insurance against unemployment by labour organisations, our study of the facts of unemployment has driven us to the conviction that no solution of the problem can be approximately complete for this generation, and afford help of the right kind to those who need it most, which does not include the provision of work under certain conditions which will be defined in a later chapter. Weekly allowances will not appreciably prevent the demoralisation and hopelessness at present engendered by months of idleness.

CHAPTER IX.

The Public Provision of Work.

Our analysis of the problem of unemployment so far points to the conclusion that periodically, at any rate, some work will have to be found by some public authorities for efficient people temporarily deprived of work through no fault of their own. It may be a disturbing conclusion to reach, but it seems nevertheless to be necessitated by the facts of the trade cycle which is an incident quite external to the workman. Realising, then, that work—real work which is not the sham work of the labour test—must be found from time to time, we naturally think first of the ordinary activities of local authorities. Now many of the undertakings of public authorities can be carried out at times chosen deliberately, and there appears to be no reason, therefore, why, within limits, the public demand for labour should not be made to vary inversely as the trade cycle, being rendered most intense when market demand is slackest.

The Local Government Board would seem to regard the achievement of this inverse relation as both desirable and feasible seeing that local authorities were urged by the Board as soon as money became cheap during the present depression to put in hand works of public utility. The result was that in the first nine months of 1908 more local loans were authorised than in the whole of the preceding year.

We are well aware that much of the work done by local authorities is useless for the unemployed. There are certain projects, nevertheless, which are comparatively suitable, and might be held up. In times of severe distress the ordinary tasks so reserved might be supplemented to some extent, but in this proposal a

distinct issue is raised—namely, whether, after the reformation of the Poor Law, local authorities or some other bodies should provide the appreciably unremunerative occupation. That for many years to come at least some rough work at a low wage will have to be found in periods of bad trade, to prevent both distress and demoralisation among those who are not exactly unemployable, we cannot feel a doubt. Whether such work should be managed by Public Bodies or put out to contractors, would be a matter of indifference as regards the objects which we have in mind, if only occupation were provided. The bulk of the persons most urgently in need of work being unskilled labourers, the problem is really less awkward than it would seem at first.

The following table gives some particulars of the relief works which have been either provided or partially financed by the various Distress Committees in Lancashire. For purposes of contrast, similar figures for certain large areas are furnished. Works provided and paid for entirely by the local authority are excluded as far as possible.

The nature of the work done has been as follows:—Making of new roads and street cleansing at Manchester, Blackburn, Bolton, Burnley and Salford; widening and improving roads and bridges at Manchester, Barrow-in-Furness, Bolton, Middleton and Burnley; laying out of playing fields and parks at Manchester, Liverpool, Barrow-in-Furness, Preston, Gorton, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford and St. Helens; construction of lakes and water parks at Manchester, Liverpool, Rochdale and Salford; farm work at Salteye (Manchester), stone-breaking (Barrow-in-Furness and St. Helens), afforestation (Bolton), cleaning river bed and walling and cleaning of schools (Burnley), laying of new water main (Blackburn) and sewing work for women at Manchester and Liverpool.

District	Number returned as known to be out of work at the end of			Number given employment relief			Aggregate extent of employment-relief (men-days)			Total amount of wages			Amount of grant by Local Government Board, Oct.–Feb.
	Nov., 1908	Dec., 1908	Jan., 1909	Nov., 1908	Dec., 1908	Jan., 1909	Nov., 1908	Dec., 1908	Jan., 1909	Nov., 1908	Dec., 1908	Jan., 1909	
										£	£	£	£
Barrow ...	1,839	1,889	1,905	453	341	490	1,238	1,328	2,349	335	263	538	1,850
Blackburn	250	236	296	115	84	77	500			87	60	55	657
Bolton ...	1,293	1,264	1,287	223	204	173	3,583	2,310	3,028	672	402	454	180
Bootle	89	56	25	6	177	50		843	430		172	89	Nil
Burnley .	1,048	790	863	391	257	227	2,080	1,000	1,024	330	173	150	200
Bury	320	330	349	(The Corporation provided some relief work.)									
Gorton ..	401	463	344	Nil	Nil	138	Nil	Nil	444	Nil	Nil	79	250
Heywood	245	205	141	66	58	72	447	504	736	70	92	108	Nil
Liverpool	2,122	1,486	1,407	607	519	598	8,330	11,387	8,152	1,066	1,249	998	3,000
Manchester	5,058	5,241	4,390	1,160	2,603	2,238	14,594	20,222	21,707	2,668	5,289	4,138	13,143
Middleton	290	310	350	66	159	161				136	347	290	Nil
Oldham ..	271	173	244	43	58	44	408	754	460	76	73	75	Nil
Preston ...	542	550	1,061	67	62	34				188	174	95	Nil
Rochdale	290	292	266	130	173	240	648	686	833	110	117	136	Nil
St. Helens	682	658	396	92	48	43	752	735	434	67	62	39	620
Salford ...	1,940	2,269	1,891	550	460	507	6,600	4,140	4,120	977	814	725	Nil
Lancashire	16,680	16,212	15,305	3,960	5,203	5,092	30,180	52,990	43,717	6,782	9,287	7,969	19,900
London (incl. outer)	46,887	50,765	54,710	6,977	8,551	11,006	85,485	114,761	137,090	15,924	21,634	26,006	101,422
England & Wales	106,216	117,335	126,696	15,893	24,597	32,152	167,653	266,062	316,751	28,800	45,558	54,641	167,096
United Kingdom	123,162	134,445	145,151	21,128	31,820	39,743	240,403	372,221	412,777	37,018	58,472	66,400	*200,000

Figures unknown for the spaces left blank.

* Of the £200,000 voted by Parliament, £28,000 has been allocated to Scotland and £6,750 to Ireland.

Work which would ordinarily have been undertaken has been excluded as far as possible from the above table, and also such work as street sweeping as a rule.

The intention of the Unemployed Workmen Act, 1905, was that the expense of relief work should be borne by voluntary contributions, supplemented by national grants. The voluntary contributions elicited for the provision of work have been most disappointing; the explanation is dissatisfaction with the policy of local authorities and with results, discontent as to the distribution of the burden, and dislike of the charitable basis altogether—feelings which are comparatively widespread. In Manchester £3,600 was raised between 1st April and 18th December, in Salford £1,100 from the beginning of 1906 up to the middle of November, 1908, in Oldham £637 up to 17th November, in Liverpool £1,400 by the end of December, in Bolton £700 by the end of January, 1909. This list is not quite exhaustive. In addition appreciable sums have been raised for the relief of distress, other than by the provision of work, in Manchester and Salford, Liverpool, Heywood and a few other places.

When the records of the several places mentioned in the table are compared, striking differences are observed between the numbers of applicants to whom employment has been given, as well as between the aggregate numbers of days' employment assigned to each man. Doubtless there will always be divergencies caused by special local conditions; but on the other hand a more uniform system of administration over a large area would seem to be desirable. The degree in which Distress Committees have assuaged distress among the industrious is remarkably small, unless we are to suppose that numbers constituting an enormous percentage of those who apply for relief work are not, in the terms of the Act, "honestly desirous of finding work," "of good character" and "capable of more suitable treatment under the Act than under the Poor Law." That very large sections of the applicants ought not to be helped in this way we have been given reasons for

believing, but we are not prepared to take the view, which, indeed, few would seriously advance, that 83 per cent. of the applicants in the United Kingdom in November were of this kind. It may be observed, in this connection, that about 10 per cent. of those offered work failed to present themselves for it. Lancashire, with its 74 per cent. left unassisted for the same month (November, 1908), contrasts very favourably with other places, particularly with London, where the percentage of applicants not helped is as high as 85. But in London the conditions are exceptional.

Nor is the paucity of the numbers relieved the most disturbing feature disclosed by the table. The extent of employment given to the 26 per cent. assisted in Lancashire in November on an average only just exceeded 11 days per man, while the average total earnings were but 36s. 5d. per man. Corresponding figures for other districts in the same month of November are shown in the adjoining table:—

District	Percentage given relief	Average number of days' employment-relief	Total wages per man		Average wages per man per day	
			s.	d.	s.	d.
Lancashire	25·6	11·2	36	5	3	3
London	14·9	12·2	45	9	3	9
England & Wales	15·0	10·5	35	11	3	5
United Kingdom..	17·1	11·3	34	10	3	1

In the course of our examination of such works as have been conducted in Lancashire certain principles have become defined and outstanding in our minds. In the first place, we would emphasise that public authorities ought not to be taken unawares. The work to be done and the means of carrying it through should be thought out long before the onrush of depression. A good half of the hopelessness of the records of relief works is probably to be attributed to recurrent states of

unpreparedness. The recognition of this principle implies the importance of long-sighted policy in town-planning and improvement schemes. Secondly, we are of opinion that the men so taken on should be carefully selected, and placed as much as possible under the conditions of ordinary employed labour, so that the work may have none of the features of a labour test for poor relief. Labour tests cannot reasonably be expected to yield an output which is approximately normal. Human nature is constitutionally incapable of working its best if it feels that the result of its efforts has no value. Persons ought not to be given relief work if ordinarily they are incapable of getting regular work. Theirs are cases for treatment by other agencies.

Repeated experience has proved the importance of most careful selection; numerous instances might be cited of relief works having been rendered an abuse by the admission of unsuitable persons who have mixed with and contaminated the rest. Even in arranging the work and organising the labour the principle of selection should be observed. We have in mind one town in Lancashire in particular in which this has been done with comparatively excellent results. The men were divided into three batches and placed on work suited to their capacities, the most difficult tasks being assigned to the superior batches. The value of the labour, expressed as a percentage of the value of labour ordinarily employed, was in each case as follows—of the first class 78 per cent., of the second 76, of the third 46. The first class were engaged on a piece of heavy excavating, the second were placed at road making and repairing, and the third at work in public parks. Careful attention was, of course, devoted to the problem of direction and supervision. It should be more widely realised that labour employed in this way needs much more than the usual degree of control and oversight. Many examples could be given of failure due to unobservance of

the principle of selection. At one place where the unemployed were worked side by side with Corporation employees, but paid at a lower rate, their value fell instead of rising. The mixed feeling of hopelessness and discontent engendered fully accounted for the result.

In accordance with our view that relief work should be made as unlike a labour test for charity as possible, we feel sure of the unwisdom of giving employment by the half-week and for short days. Such arrangements tend to encourage the idea, which is subversive of application, that the work is a sham, and the intervening days of idleness are likely to undo the good effects of those fully occupied. Many responsible for relief works have supported our view that the system of providing broken employment for each person fails disastrously. So convinced are the authorities at Liverpool of this that the Distress Committee have laid it down that if a man is found to be at all satisfactory he may be kept on for eight weeks continuously, and that the period may then be extended to the maximum of sixteen weeks allowed by the Act. The consequence is greatly improved results. According to the superintendent of relief work, the men do much better after the first fortnight. It is encouraging to learn that in only two cases out of seventy did the report on the home conditions of those given employment in Liverpool show no improvement as a result of the relief afforded. We recognise, of course, that time must be given, especially as the depression draws to an end, for other jobs to be sought. Were a well-organised system of labour exchanges in existence the waste of time and effort involved in this searching for places would be avoided.

The third principle we desire to emphasise is that the rate of wages paid should be appreciably lower than those paid under ordinary conditions for similar work either by municipalities or private employers. The lower rate is needful for various reasons. Since the

work in question is undertaken by the authority solely with a view to finding temporary occupation for men who would otherwise be unemployed, it is important that the men should be drawn back into the main industrial current as soon as possible, as they would tend to be were the wages at the emergency work low. Again, in all probability some of the undertakings would not have been entered upon had there not been unemployed labour to provide for; that is to say, the value to the community of the work done would be less than its cost even when most economically carried out. As it is, the Local Government Board is very unwilling to make grants for projects which would ordinarily have been embarked upon. Moreover, it has to be remembered that the labour so employed will have, on an average, a lower value than ordinary labour, because many will be engaged in unaccustomed activities, and the average of physical efficiency will be beneath that of ordinary labourers. Illustrations of the last point are furnished in the adjoining table, in which the value of work done by the unemployed is expressed as a percentage of the value of the work which could have been done in the same time by the same number of ordinary workmen in the ordinary course of things. The table is compiled from information kindly furnished us by the several places mentioned:—

Bury	80 per cent.
Salford	68 and 75 per cent.
Liverpool	50 and 75 per cent.
Heywood	61 per cent.
Bolton	60 per cent.

Similar figures for other schemes of relief would suggest that in some of the places mentioned above very favourable estimates have been formed of the value of the work, but, this possibility being allowed for, the evidence is sufficient to justify the conclusion that this kind of

help could be made a success under the system of continuity of employment for each workman who proved satisfactory. Discontinuity means that a comparatively high rate of wages must be paid for bad work—for the rates actually paid see the previous table—and that the work must therefore be unnecessarily expensive. The difficulty that the provision of relief works involves the cost not only of labour, but of carts, horses and implements, does not appear insurmountable, though no doubt it is calculated to give pause if these undertakings are decided on suddenly, and not assumed in the natural order of things as depressions recur.

The payment of the lower rate was one of the essential conditions laid down in the Chamberlain circular of 1886. Departure from this rule has been responsible for much of the failure of relief works. It has rendered the work undertaken, which is not exactly needed, more costly than work more urgently needed, which perhaps the unemployed were incapable of carrying out. A firm handle has thereby been offered to criticism. And there is no doubt now that among large sections of the community public relief work is regarded as a public abuse. The higher wages have necessitated the scheme of half-week and short-day employment, since full employment would have meant weekly wages equal to those earned by more efficient men still in regular employment, and the reaction of this demoralising arrangement has meant a further enhancement of cost. We all know that the system of casual labour is usually productive of bad social effects and that it ought to be eliminated wherever possible as soon as possible: yet our system of relief work for the unemployed has been one of casual labour.

The following facts relating to applicants for relief work at Liverpool, Stockport and another town, are of significance:—

Liverpool.

Total of 3 years to August, 1908.

Male Applicants.

Number of applicants	8,690
Could not be found	1,173
Found other employment	841
Investigated and found unsuitable	580
†Investigated and found satisfactory, but subsequently cancelled	1,907
Leaving to be dealt with	4,260
‡Offered and accepted work	2,234
Offered but reported that they had work ...	442
Offered but did not present themselves ...	903*
Offered and refused	80
Still on Register or still to be investigated ...	601

Female Applicants.

Number of applicants	981
Could not be found	115
Found other employment	108
Investigated and found unsuitable	115
†Investigated and found satisfactory but subsequently cancelled	156
Leaving to be dealt with	496
§Offered and accepted work	496
Offered but did not present themselves ...	15
Satisfactory and still to be dealt with	366

† An applicant must re-register every 21 days otherwise his or her application is cancelled

‡ Total number of days worked was, in the last two years, 20,976, giving an average of 33·2 days' employment per man.

§ Total number of days worked was, in the last two years, 2982 days, giving an average of 35·1 days' employment per woman.

* It is estimated that a large proportion of these had found other employment between the date of registration and the offer of employment.

STOCKPORT.

Result of investigation made by special officers of 672 applicants on the books at the end of November.

Qualified cases	306
In regular work when investigation made ...	80
In temporary work when investigation made	30
New applicants not yet considered by Committee	100
Disqualified for various reasons	117
	672

ANOTHER LANCASHIRE TOWN.

(The numbers given are percentages.)

Registered male applicants	100
After investigation, not entertained for various reasons	48
Offered employment	51

Of those who were offered employment

12 per cent. obtained private employment.
11 ,, ,, after two days failed to return to relief work.
3 ,, ,, were discharged for personal misdemeanour.
7 ,, ,, never presented themselves.

One thing is clear from these statistics, namely, that a good deal of weeding out of applicants is necessary, and that a fair number will weed themselves out when the danger of getting real work becomes imminent. In connection with these figures the following table relating to London will be instructive in showing the reasons for

which relief works were left, and the numbers leaving for each reason, in the case of men engaged on non-colony works in 1905–7 :—

Prospect of work	73
Misconduct	99
Medically unfit	35
Emigrated	48
Sickness...	13
Trouble at home	2
Died	4
Drink	5
No reason, or own accord	635
Army training	1
Transferred to local and other works ...	29
Nervous of water	1
Close of work	1,596
Disqualified	4
Time expired	2
Laziness and malingering	88
Obtained other work	352
Verminous	2
Order of Committee	5
Reduction of numbers	28

The objection has been made to any intrusion by public authorities to extend the demand for labour at times of bad trade that it would make matters worse by taking away from private enterprise work that it would otherwise get. This objection is not well founded. Let us consider it first from the point of view of the effect of such public action on the demand for labour during the time of depression. In so far as public authorities simply deferred until bad times work which they intended to do themselves in any event, their action obviously could not have the effect alleged. Nor could it if they 'made' work for the unemployed, for what one means by

'making' work in this case is embarking on projects which would never have been contemplated but for the existence of unemployed labour in need of some occupation. It could not, therefore, be work withdrawn from private enterprise. A lake in a park, say, might be a very pleasant thing to have. Suppose it cost £600 to make and the public authority thought it worth only £400, then, in view of more pressing needs, it would not ordinarily be constructed. But when there is much unemployed labour it is much better that it should make such a lake than do nothing; though wages and conditions of work should be such that the cost would exceed the £400 by as little as possible. The undertaking could not affect the quantity of work left for outside contractors to do, since the work of constructing the lake would not otherwise have been given to them, and they had no reason to expect it. Let us now look at the long-period effects. It might be urged, with a view to establishing the objection with which we began, that the ordinary work of the public authority when transferred to bad times would be taken from the good times, and that the £500, say, spent on the lake would mean that £500 would be withdrawn from expenditure on something else. Now, as regards the first point, the transference of work from good to bad times is exactly what is wanted; and as regards the second point, we observe that this transference of expenditure from one purpose to another would, owing to the deliberate intention of the public authority, mean a transference of demand from good times to bad times, which again is just what is wanted. But, it may be protested, enough work will not then be left for the good times. To make this retort is to plunge deep into the 'lump of labour' fallacy. In place of the work withdrawn other work could be done, which had not previously been done because there was no labour available to do it. Demand is highly elastic, and the only reason why we have not got more goods than

we have to-day is that we are fully occupied—except for the temporary periods of disorganisation known as depressions—in producing what we do get. The only ultimate difference, therefore, between the results of constructing the lake and not constructing the lake would be that in the one case the community would have a lake, and in the other case it would have no lake but probably much demoralised labour.

A few words must be said of labour colonies and afforestation. There are two labour colonies in Lancashire, the Salteye Farm (39 acres), undertaken by the Manchester Distress Committee, and Marple Dale Farm (29 acres), managed by a voluntary committee, both of which we have visited. Each would accommodate about twelve men at the kind of work which was being done. The discouraging history of the three years' life of the former is well known. The cost was enormous in proportion to results. It has recently been given up. The latter, started twelve months ago, will in future be worked in connection with the Social Service Union as a remedial institution like Lingfield. Our opinion is emphatically that the colony system is valuable only (1) as an avenue to agricultural work like La Chalmelle, near Paris; (2) as remedial, *i.e.*, for the restoration of the physically or morally enfeebled; and (3) as semi-penal—and remedial if possible—for the maintenance and discouragement of the 20,000 to 30,000 habitual vagrants of this country. The colony for the last object should certainly be distinct from other colonies.

At the Salteye farm, when we visited it, eight of the twelve men lived on the colony, and were paid 15/- a week and lodged rent free. The other four travelled to and from their homes; they also were paid 15/- a week, but received their tram fares in addition. The market rate of wages in the district for labour of the kind performed by these men is 18/- for about a ten hours'

working day. On the Salteye farm an eight hours' day was the rule. The men found and prepared their own food, though they were allowed to buy saleable stock and also to supplement their food supplies by using unsaleable vegetables, such as budded cabbages and small potatoes. The idea of training the men in agricultural and horticultural work was only partially carried out, and no serious steps were taken to get them employment elsewhere. Of the twelve persons on the estate in December, 1908, eight had been there from the first year. The cost in proportion to the results attained has been enormous, but it must be noted that many of the losses were due to bad management in the first year. The following is a brief statement of accounts from the commencement of the colony up to November 23, 1908, exclusive of rent:—

	Year ending June 30th 1907 £	Year ending June 30th 1908 £	July 1st, 1908, to Nov. 23rd 1908 £	Total £
Sales of produce - -	—	65	86	152
Rents of Allotments -	—	6	—	6
Balance - - -	594	939	219	1751
	594	1010	305	1909

	Year ending June 30th, 1907 £	Year ending June 30th, 1908 £	July 1st, 1908, to Nov. 23rd, 1909 £	Total £
Wages - - -	234	551	194	979
Stock, etc. - - -	360	459	111	930
	594	1010	305	1909

On the 23rd November, 1908, it was estimated that the produce still in hand would realise £170 and the permanent stock £152.

Deducting these amounts from the total adverse balance of £1,751, we find that the total net cost of the experiment to the citizens from its commencement has been £1,429, that is, about £1 per week per man, apart from rent. The colony was closed in February, 1909.

At the Marple Dale colony the men are, as a rule, considerably younger than those on the Salteye farm. They are paid at the rate of 5/-a week, and are given board and lodging. Four shillings of this 5/- is banked for the men by the Committee, so that they may have a small sum standing to their credit when the time comes for them to leave. So far about 30 men have been at work on the farm for varying periods: the average at any one time is about 5·25. There can be no doubt that the open air life has had a beneficial effect on the physique and general health of the men. The colony was started in February, 1908, and up to the end of December the upkeep (*i.e.*, cost apart from capital expenditure) amounted to £400 as compared with receipts of £150. That is to say, the cost per man employed, apart from capital expenditure, was about £1 a week. The late start and troubles connected with management at the start, the consequence of which was that much work had to be done twice, is put forward in partial explanation of the figures; and, of course, it would not be fair to judge any institution on the results of one year's working.

The need of the detention colony for those suffering from heritable defects is, of course, far more pressing than the need of the colony for others who are unemployable. The problem concerned with the right social action with regard to the former is a very special one, largely medical in character, which we cannot adequately include in a general discourse on unemployment which is intended to relate mainly to the employable, but it is one of such urgent importance that some brief notice must be taken of it. What we have to

say relates mainly to the so-called 'feeble-minded.' About ten years ago a permissive Act was passed enabling local education authorities to institute special schools for the feeble-minded. Certain localities have taken advantage of the powers with which they were thereby invested, Manchester among the number. As a result some of the children are brought much nearer the normal level. As it is, however, the bulk of them pass from these schools, when they have been in such schools —still in numerous urban districts and generally in rural districts no special school provision has been made for the feeble-minded—into the world where, sooner or later, they perpetuate their species, for there appears to be no doubt that the main cause of feeble-mindedness is heredity. A serious effort should be made to pass these unfortunate persons from the special schools into suitable institutions. They would lead happier lives and the evil would thereby be reduced for the next generation. When left to their own resources they are helpless. Miss Dendy, writes:

> "It is not in their natures to stick to anything, and yet, in proper conditions, they can and do work. But it has to be remembered that for them 'proper conditions' means that day by day they must be set to their work. They have not the power of guiding themselves; they must be guided. And the very weakness of will that is at the root of their trouble makes them so easy to be guided, if only the trouble be taken."

Manchester has such an institution as we have in mind in the farm of 80 acres at Sandlebridge, where twenty feeble-minded young men and lads work under the direction of six supervisors. The results are highly satisfactory in view of the character of the labour under direction, and there cannot be two opinions as to the

importance of extending work of this kind until it becomes exhaustive of the trouble with which it has to cope.

The strong points about afforestation in its bearing on the problem of unemployment or under-employment are (1) that much of the work is very simple, and can be easily learnt; (2) that its demand for labour is greatest in the winter months when agriculture is slack and many trades are suffering from seasonal unemployment; and (3) that no great harm results apparently from concentrating in one or two years much of the work that would be done ordinarily in the two or three years before and after. Hence it would seem a suitable panacea for cyclical unemployment and much seasonal unemployment, particularly that of agricultural labour. Its defect as an occupation for urban workpeople is that the work would be far from their homes and from the places where employment more suited to their powers would ultimately be offered. A part of this objection would be removed by the institution of efficient labour exchanges, but the costs of transportation and temporary housing accommodation would remain. The experiment of utilising urban unemployed labour for afforestation has been tried in more than one case, and its value, when it is properly selected and supervised, is found to be not very much below that of the labour which would ordinarily be employed. Nearly 13,000 acres in Lancashire are said to be suitable for afforestation. We wish to make it quite clear that we do not share the views of those witnesses before the Royal Commission on Coast Erosion and Afforestation who urged the undertaking of the latter with a view to the permanent and continuous augmentation of the quantity of employment provided in the country and so to the absorption of the unemployed. Our investigations have not brought to

light any normal lack of employment of the sort which these witnesses believe to exist, and in theory we find no reason to suppose that it exists. The value of afforestation work, to our mind, if it be found practicable, is that it may be used as a corrective of that irregularity of work, in the seasonal occupations and in most occupations over the trade cyclical period, which is the bane of present conditions.

CHAPTER X.

Labour Exchanges.

In every modern community wherever any commodity is dealt with in bulk we find institutions known as exchanges; thus we have cotton exchanges, coal exchanges, iron exchanges, corn exchanges. Without these exchanges the higher organisation of business would have been impossible. There is every reason to suppose that labour exchanges would result in social advantages no less considerable than those which result from produce exchanges.

Even when trade is excellent and no changes of moment are taking place in productive methods a census of employment would show that some people were out of work. All of these would not be the unfit and the idle. If proof is needed it will be found in the fact that the percentage of unemployment returned by the trade unions never sinks to zero. On reviewing these returns from 1898 to the present time we find that the percentage never fell below 2·2.

Of course some changes are always taking place in productive methods, but if they ceased and all processes of manufacture became stereotyped still there would be at any one time a percentage of efficient people unemployed. The explanation is that at any moment some industries are waxing while others are waning in consequence of the fluctuating relations between the demands for different things; that as a result of competition some businesses are succeeding and growing while others are shrinking and disappearing and new businesses are constantly appearing; and that there are always some persons leaving posts and seeking

others either because they were unsuited or unsuitable, or on account of the incidents noted above. Continuous changes of these kinds are inevitable, and they are always supplemented to some extent by the readjustments involved in productive advance. The absolutely stationary state is not merely non-existent but actually inconceivable. Now in society no movement completes itself instantaneously: change takes place in time. Some of the displaced labour is unemployed for a day before it gets to work again; some is unemployed for a week and some for a longer period. No distress may be occasioned; indeed in some cases the change of employment may have been seized upon quite wisely as opportunity for a holiday. Clearly if this re-shuffling of labour goes on unintermittently a census should always reveal some percentage of the population unemployed. What the percentage is depends upon the extent of change. It also depends upon the degree of friction which change meets with, *i.e.*, upon what we shall call the *social time-lag*. This is high in periods of depression and low when trade is brisk. Already a system of intermediaries is working in the theatrical and scholastic professions and to some extent in the case of clerical work. The expenditure of time and money entailed in searching the columns of the many newspapers and periodicals in which educational positions are advertised is so considerable that the scholastic agent, who makes it his business not only to collect and classify current advertisements but also to keep in touch with headmasters and Educational Committees, has come to occupy a distinct position in the educational world. A similar, though not necessarily identical, system is required in the general labour market.

In its relation to the employment of labour a modern community is just as complex as in its dealings with commodities, and *prima facie*, it is not, therefore, to be imagined that the machinery which succeeds in the one

case will fail in the other. Demand for labour of a given kind waxes and wanes, the needs of a particular business for labour alter their character, men's powers and tastes are subject to variations which suit them for new kinds of work; the problem of adapting supply to demand is therefore one of continuous readjustment, and this readjustment is not likely to take place rapidly and satisfactorily if it is not facilitated by some agency. Demand and supply being so scattered and shifting, it is remarkable that the bulk of the labour of the country should ever find work approximately suited to its aptitudes in the absence of an inter-connected system of exchanges. Every trade union is, of course, a highly efficient registry office for its members, as regards work in the trade which it represents, especially the union which provides out-of-work or travelling benefits, though it is the aim of every union, whether such benefits be paid or not, to direct its unemployed members to places where a demand for their kind of labour exists. There is, however, practically no co-ordination of work among the various trade unions, and a workman who wishes to change his occupation and enter, say, another branch of his trade, or an allied trade, is hampered rather than helped by his union membership. Moreover, trade unionists probably form but 4 or 5 per cent. of the total population, or about one-fifth of the manual workers of the country, and the individuals in the great army of labour outside the unions are left quite unaided in their search for work. People to-day do not hawk cotton goods or cutlery about as they did a century ago, and the system of labour hawking itself about from works to works is just as wasteful and unsatisfactory and should be just as obsolete.

Within the last few years steps have been taken to organise the existing chaos in the labour market, particularly in Germany, where the steady industrialising of the population makes the need of reform acutely felt.

At the present time in the United Kingdom there are 46 labour exchanges at work—28 in London and 18 in the provinces, five of the latter being in Lancashire. Most of the provincial labour exchanges are sadly ineffective, much of their work being merged in the general relief work of the local distress committees. They are very little used by employers; and it is evident that, for the success of labour exchanges, the fullest co-operation on the part of employers is absolutely essential Most of the exchanges at the time they were established sent out notices to the various employers of labour in their respective districts, and asked to be notified of any situations falling vacant or of any increased demand for workmen. A few still continue to do this at certain intervals; one or two occasionally advertise in suitable papers; but by most little, if any, subsequent action has been taken. At the same time some exchanges report the beginnings of connections with workshops in their districts, and, as regards women's work, with hotels, restaurants, hospitals, and some shops and workrooms. Improvement is particularly noticeable in London. In the report of June, 1907, the chairman of the London exchanges says, "The exchange is being increasingly used for skilled labour. In the six months ending June, 1907, there were 5, 595 situations offered for highly skilled workrs, of which 2,977 were filled; in the same period 2,939 situations for semi-skilled labour were offered, of which 1,909 were filled, and 5,441 for unskilled labour,of which 4,017 were filled. As the exchanges have become better known the class of labour making use of them has improved."

It has been the almost invariable custom in the past to establish or open exchanges only in times of bad trade, when depression has begun and unemployment is rife, and to close or suspend them when trade begins to improve, and the value of the exchange to employers

is therefore rising. If they were actively worked when trade was good they would strike root under the pressure of demand and be rendered capable of performing important services when trade was bad. With a staff generally inadequate to requirements proper organisation of the exchange is impossible at the best of times. Too frequently as it is, machinery is no sooner set going than it is thrown out of gear by a sudden rush of applicants, for the majority of whom no places can be found. The result is that employees lose confidence in the exchange as an exchange, and employers get to think of it as the resort merely of applicants for charity. It is a common practice to carry on the administration of relief work provided by distress committees with the same staff and in the same building as the labour exchange. These distress committees were appointed under the Unemployed Workmen Act (1905) to obtain and supervise relief work for the unemployed in their respective districts. They were empowered to institute or take over and control labour exchanges proper. Inquiries reveal the fact that, in so far as this power has been exercised, in times of serious depression of trade the work of the labour exchange, pure and simple, is disorganised in consequence and its true function is lost sight of. The comparative success of the Warrington exchange, indicated by figures in the table below, may be partially ascribed to the policy, adopted by the local authority from the outset, of not allowing the exchange to degenerate into an office merely for the relief of distress.

Superintendents of the various exchanges visited agree in affirming that the best workers among the unemployed, whether skilled or unskilled, will not register at the exchanges so long as such registration entails association, even of a remote kind, with the kind of men who form a considerable part of those applying for distress work. The explanation is not mere class

prejudice on the part of the men. It is a feeling that by such association their reputations as genuine workmen will be brought under suspicion. They prefer, instead, to wander around on their own account from workshop to workshop looking for a job, thus wasting time in a way that should not be necessary in a well-organised community. This attitude of the workmen, in its turn, reacts deleteriously on the attitude of the employers towards the exchange, for, so long as the employer has a better chance of obtaining an efficient workman by leaving his foreman to choose one of the applicants at his gates, so long will he refrain from making use of the labour exchange. Yet there are certain indications that the need of labour exchanges is being felt by employers; we have found a small, private exchange started by a few employers at Heywood in 1906, and though it has achieved little its existence is a hopeful sign. For a labour exchange special offices, suitably situated, should be engaged. A police station is not a proper place for such an institution. The offices for the Berlin public exchange were erected a few years ago at a cost of £30,000.

It cannot be too rigidly insisted that if the labour exchanges are to be successful they must be organised and administered as to attract the higher classes of labour. The ideal would mean exhaustive registration of the demand for labour of different kinds and of supplies of labour, and arrangements whereby each demand was rapidly brought into touch with the supply which met its needs best. A multitude of registering offices would therefore be essential, and a system of connections between the several offices and clearing centres, which should themselves be united in a central clearing-house. In addition, in its initial stages, active agents would have to be employed to secure that adequate use should be made of the exchange. The immense scope for reform is seen at once from a

comparison of the work done at four of the Lancashire exchanges with that effected by the London exchanges, which, it will be seen from the two specimens given, are still far behind the German. The following table relates to November, 1908—the statistics for Germany cover all sorts of exchanges in the districts mentioned (whether public, private, employers, or workmen, though the public and semi-public are far the most important of those which make returns to the Imperial Statistical Bureau) :—

Name of Exchange.	New applicants.		Situations offered.	Situations filled.								No. of situations offered per 100 new applicants.	No. of situations filled per 100 situations offered.
	Men and boys.	Women and girls.		Building trades.	Metal and engineering trades.	Transport and general.	Other occupations (men and boys).	Women and girls.	All situations. Permanent.	All situations. Temporary.	All situations. Total.		
Liverpool	18	86	24	2	—	—	11	8	8	13	21	23·1	87·5
Manchester	1,772	431	312	11	—	19	71	96	112	85	197	14·2	63·1
Salford[1]	112	—	38	3	—	21	11	—	5	30	35	34·0	92·1
Warrington	114	75	62	1	4	7	8	19	24	15	39	32·8	63·0
Lancashire (Total)	2,016	592	436	17	4	47	101	123	149	143	292	16·7	67·0
London group (Total)[2]	24	113	2,286	195	119	258	637	635	1,644	200	1,844	9·8	80·7
United Kingdom (Total)	38	716	5,373	339	169	762	2,266	862	2,438	1,960	4,398	13·8	81·9
Berlin	32,300	2,600	23,900	All trades in district.				2,000			22,200	68·5	92·9
Bavaria	28,200	12,100	15,200	All trades in district.				3,660			10,600	37·7	69·7
Germany (Total)[3]	230,000	43,000	126,000					23,000			101,000	46·1	80·1

1. An exchange for women has recently been opened in the borough.
2. Does not include Westminster, West Ham, or the bureaux of the Salvation Army.
3. On returns of 562 exchanges reporting out of 781.

Name of Exchange.	Applicants remaining on the Registers.					
	Building trades.	Metal and engineering trades.	Transport and general.	Other occupations (men and boys).	Women and girls.	Total.
Liverpool	1	—	1	4	184	190
Manchester	355	790	5,359	825	655	7,984
Salford [1]	96	50	159	161	—	466
Warrington	17	71	83	76	127	374
Lancashire (Total)	469	911	5,602	1,066	966	9,014
London group (Total) [2]	1,790	971	3,203	2,693	1,567	10,224
United Kingdom (Total)	5,055	5,958	15,900	6,750	3,456	37,119
Berlin						
Bavaria						
Germany (Total) [3]						

1. An exchange for women has recently been opened in the borough.
2. Does not include Westminster, West Ham, or the bureaux of the Salvation Army.
3. On returns of 562 exchanges reporting out of 781.

Taking the three months November and December, 1908, and January, 1909, we find 7,250 new applicants in Lancashire and 80,500 in the United Kingdom, 24 per cent. of the former being found places and 19 per cent. of the latter, while in both cases over 80 per cent. of the situations offered were filled. In a previous chapter we have given a table showing in fuller detail the occupations of applicants.

The four exchanges of Lancashire under consideration have experienced varying degrees of success not only in finding work for applicants, but also in attracting unemployed workmen and in keeping on their books those who have once enrolled themselves. Inquiries go to show that in the majority of cases applicants report for the first week or fortnight after entering, and then, not finding employment offered them through the exchange, come to believe more in their own power of getting work than in that of the exchange. Thus in London at the beginning of November there were 10,000 names on the books; 24,000 new applicants presented themselves during the month, and though only 1,800 situations were filled through the registry, yet there were but 10,000 names left on the register at the end of November. No less than 22,000 names were struck off the " live register " as it is called, and it is inconceivable that most of these had discovered work for themselves.

The percentages in the last column of the table disclose the fact—apt to be overlooked when the problem of unemployment is being considered as a whole—that each of the four exchanges had situations offered which it was unable to fill, in many cases, no doubt, because it had not on its books men or women of the right kind for the positions vacant. This fact points again to the necessity not only for labour exchanges in all centres of industry, but also for a sound system of co-ordination of their activities. That such co-ordination is not only desirable but can also be secured is proved by the

experience of the Central Employment Exchange for London, whose chairman in his report for June 1907 (the latest published), says:—"The value of the co-ordination of work of the different exchanges through the central office has continued to be shown. In the six months ending June, 1907, 1,298 persons, of whom 942 were males, were placed in *other* districts through the Central Exchange. The experience already obtained gives every ground for belief that far more satisfactory results will ensue when the exchanges are officially connected through some national system with districts outside London, and when they are realised to be not a temporary expedient for the relief of distress, but an important factor of industrial organisation, of benefit alike to employer and employed." As a step in this direction the London Central Exchange has for some time now sent to all provincial exchanges monthly lists of places vacant which they are unable to fill.

The absence of any real success in the case of those exchanges already established would almost induce scepticism as to the value of the exchange system, in spite of the strong *a priori* arguments in its favour, but for the successes met with in Germany, and more recently the very striking improvement in London. In Germany nearly 800 exchanges make returns to the Imperial Statistical Bureau, and about 150 would seem to be exceedingly efficient. The work done is shown in the foregoing table, but the figures there given are, of course, somewhat exceptional, owing to the trade depression. Taking another year and month casually, we find that in August, 1906, of 212,000 places returned as offered by the exchanges which reported, 138,000 were filled out of 206,000 applicants, men and women.

It is important that the exact bearing of a satisfactory system of labour exchanges should be realised. It would not alter the demand for labour, but it would bring it more rapidly into touch with supplies, and it would

almost certainly result in the supply which satisfied each demand being on the average more appropriate to it. To-day what may be called the *social time-lag* intervening between the loss, or voluntary resignation, of one position and the discovery of another by an ordinary workman who is not a trade unionist is serious. This high *time-lag* means waste which exchanges could reduce. Its existence accounts, of course, for the fact that there are always some efficient people out of work, however good the state of trade; the trade union percentage of unemployment seldom drops appreciably below 2. With a satisfactory system of exchanges in operation the man out of a place would find work more rapidly, and the man who wanted to make a change would be enabled to seek another post without running the risk involved in resigning that which he already held. Some German exchanges, by helping persons already employed to discover more suitable work, are succeeding in a striking degree in bridging the time-gap occasioned by changes in employment, in cases in which it is possible, and in securing the most appropriate occupation for each person. Under the existing conditions in the United Kingdom of individual search for work on the one hand and labour on the other there is a high probability that neither employer nor employee will get exactly what suits him. This again means waste and dissatisfaction. Well-organised labour exchanges would moreover be depositories of most valuable information, relating to prospects in different trades, which could be utilised in guiding the rising generation in choice of callings. Certain German exchanges are doing important work, in collaboration with the schools, in leading young people into suitable skilled occupations. Trade unionists as well as others should profit from labour exchanges, since through them the unions would be continuously provided with evaluations of demand and supply. The conversion of German trade unionists from an attitude

of opposition to the support of labour exchanges in the management of which they co-operated can only be attributed to a demonstration by experience that the existence of these exchanges is beneficial to trade unions.

Not the least of the merits of labour exchanges is that they can do something to limit the waste and demoralisation associated with the bad system of casual work. The great majority of those in distress to-day on account of unemployment are casual workers. It is to be hoped that efforts will be made in the future to reduce the extent of this system of casual work. It means very irregular wages, and consequently wasteful expenditure of wages; and far more offer themselves for intermittent work than could be provided with regular work, thereby encouraging the broken provision of work. A labour exchange through which the demand for labour passed, by pooling the casual workers, could enormously reduce the numbers needed for the work offered in jobs. The benefit would be precisely that of a clearing-house.

One of the most difficult problems connected with unemployment is that of dealing adequately with casual labour. There are few industries that do not make some use of casual labourers, but the places where they become a considerable industrial force are, of course, the docks and quay-sides of our chief ports. There would seem to be something in the very nature of the shipping industry which successfully resists all attempts to decasualize the landsmen upon which it depends. Wind, weather, tide and fog in the days of sailing ships decreed that the life of the dock labourer should be made up of periods of strenuous activity, sometimes running to 30 and more consecutive hours, alternating with periods of enforced idleness. Though sailing ships have given place to steamships yet the effects of tide, weather and fog on dock labour remain the same. Liverpool men will recall a day some two years ago when during a dense fog which lasted for several days there were no

less than twenty Atlantic liners waiting at the bar to enter the port. A great rush of work, almost unparalleled even in Liverpool's busy history, followed; the demand for labour was keen, wages rose, and men went home taking £5 and even more as the result of a few days' heavy, continuous work. Such experiences as these, acting psychologically on the mind of the dock labourer, have caused him to view a regular job with dislike and led him to prefer short spasmodic efforts on long shifts. And, apart from such experiences, the casual labourer, like the gambler, is always hoping for better luck, with the result that the supply of such labour is invariably found to be in excess of needs, even when the wastage of time due to disorganisation in bringing demand and supply together is allowed for.

There is, as we have already pointed out, every reason to believe that a well-organized system of labour exchanges, properly co-ordinated, would, by dove-tailing jobs together, provide continuous, or almost continuous, work for a large number of those who are at present dependent on casual jobs for their living. But the demand for labour at the docks is of so uncertain and irregular a character, in spite of the fact that its fluctuations are partly seasonal, that any steps in the direction of the decasualization of the docker will have to be taken by a special agency. During the last 17 years very valuable work in this direction has been done by the London and India Docks Company—the largest of the London dock companies. Prior to the reform it was estimated that about 10,000 men competed regularly for work, which, if properly distributed, would have been sufficient to give 3 - a day to 3,000 men. These 10,000 men included some of the very worst characters; whilst the physique of many was low through exposure and semi-starvation. In Liverpool at the present time, it is estimated that there are at least 15,000 casual labourers gathering about the docks, though it is calculated that the work, averaged over a long period, would not give

regular employment to more than half that number. Largely through the recommendation of Mr. Charles Booth, the London and India Dock Company introduced in 1891 its 'preference list' system. Instead of the men's being chosen by the foremen more or less haphazard as heretofore, they were registered and classified into 'permanent,' 'A,' 'B,' 'C' and 'casual.' The 'permanent' and the 'A' men were engaged on weekly wages, and formed a practically regular staff. Men on the 'B,' 'C' and 'casual' lists were engaged for the day only as the demand for labour became more intense, but in all cases 'B' men had a preference over 'C' men, and 'C' men over the 'casual' men. Similarly men on the 'B' and 'C' lists were placed in an order of preference in accordance with which work was to be offered. The system has been steadily extended, with the result that at the present time, according to a report of the Charity Organisation Committee on Unskilled Labour, about 80 per cent. of the work carried out by the London and India Docks Company is performed by weekly wage earners, the remaining 20 per cent. falling to 'B' men and 'casuals.' The 'C' list has altogether disappeared. One realizes the great value of this reform when one remembers that in 1887 it was calculated that only 16 per cent. of the work was effected by permanent labourers. Much, however, yet remains to be done in the further organisation and unification of the demand for dock labour.

Preference systems have been tried at other ports with varying success. So far Liverpool has done very little in the way of organisation, the example of London notwithstanding. In 1906 a conference of employers and employed was held at the instance of the Liverpool Distress Committee. Mr. Charles Booth's scheme and a modified scheme more adapted to the special needs of Liverpool were discussed; but, in spite of the fact that the Distress Committee offered to supply the necessary offices and stands and to equip them with telephones,

the only result of the conference was a regulation forbidding the employment of a man for more than 24 consecutive hours except when ships were being finished off for tide. The engagement of dock labour was left in its former chaotic state. Neither the employers nor the employed viewed the preference system or the modified 'stand' system with approval. The employers seemed to be afraid lest the scheme should interfere with their freedom of choice, cause extra trouble, and in periods of great activity leave a deficiency of labour. The men, on the other hand, were averse to the scheme, because they foresaw that it meant the permanent exclusion of many of them from the docks, and each man feared lest he might be among those excluded.

Manchester is more favourably situated than most ports for the introduction of reforms, there being less conflict of interest between the various classes of employers owing to the supreme control of the Ship Canal Company. Here something has been done to decasualize the labour employed. Locomotive men and shunters, crane-drivers, foremen stevedores, shed and quay foremen, checkers, warehousemen and porters are all permanently employed at weekly wages. Several firms of shipowners engaged in the coasting trade employ permanent labourers and other workmen at weekly wages, and requisition any additional men they may need from the Canal Company. Further, during periods of temporary slackness only men who have been previously employed at the docks are taken on even for casual employment, a numbered register of workmen being kept. Thus men who are in the habit of working at the docks find more regular employment than they would otherwise. But up to the present no attempt has been made to form a preference list; the foremen are still left, on the arrival of a vessel, to give out tallies to any whom they choose from a struggling crowd of labourers at the dock gates.

CHAPTER XI.

Summary and Conclusions.

This will be a very short chapter, but we think it advisable to place what we have to say by way of summarising the foregoing in a separate chapter in order to insure its not being overlooked.

The first and fundamental distinction to draw is that between the unemployment due to personal causes and the unemployment due to impersonal economic forces. Actually this distinction does not separate the unemployed into two camps: they cannot be exactly divided. When, owing to the operation of economic forces the dismissal of a man from a factory becomes essential, personal factors come into play and determine the selection of the individual to be turned adrift. The personal causes of unemployment can only be removed on a large scale by improved and extended education; but an individualising treatment of those on the brink of unemployability, and of some of those who have already been pushed over, may be trusted to effect some amelioration. Unemployability is associated with physical or mental defects, innate or acquired, including bad habits such as the drinking habit—which, when all is said, is probably the most gigantic of all the immediate causes of distress—and defects of disposition which render people unmanageable. Some of the unemployables are curable, others are not; some pass on their weakness by inheritance, while others do not. For all of the class of unemployables and semi-unemployables we recommend training institutions, remedial colonies, and detention colonies which we should hope would prove remedial, graded according to the kinds of the inmates.

Economic unemployment, as we might term it, that is the idleness not explicable only by personal ineffici-

ency, divides up again into classes according as the prime occasion consists in :—

I. The casual system of arrangement of work.

II. Industrial change.

III. Seasonality in trades.

IV. Cyclical depression.

The removal of these kinds of unemployment may be brought about automatically in the course of economic evolution, that is to say, they may be defects which society may outgrow. On the other hand, it may be absolutely necessary to impose a cure from without, or, if not absolutely necessary, it may be desirable because 'nature' may be dilatory in finding her own remedy. By 'nature' here we intend all those social forces acting independently of State interference. Again, both among the 'natural' and State remedies we must distinguish between cures and palliatives which mitigate the distress caused by unemployment.

The evil of casual labour is due to the fact that casualism has been specialised out of economic functioning. Casualism mixed up with some more regular work used to do little harm. And just as it has been specialised out, so there is reason to believe that in the very distant future it will evolve its own regularising forms. These forms tend to appear because they mean the saving of economic waste. We see a similar process of action and reaction—almost an Hegelian process from thesis and antithesis to synthesis—in the evolution of machinery. Mechanical improvements remove certain monotonous tasks, but generally create incidentally occupations in which monotony is more concentrated, which in turn are removed by further mechanical improvements, the sum total of monotonous work being steadily reduced in this way, though the degree of its bearing on any particular individual may be temporarily accentuated. However, an enterprising organised society will not be content simply to await the coming of a probable

millennium, and it would not be justified in doing so. The evil of casual labour—which means under-employment—can largely be removed by Labour Exchanges, either general, or specialised to the purpose of de-casualising casual labour and working in conjunction with Labour Exchanges. This has been fully explained in Chapter X. At present the system of casualism is encouraged by the numbers who have a depraved taste for casual work.

A national system of Labour Exchanges would cut down the time lost by labour in consequence of industrial changes, trade cycles or seasonality. These causes of unemployment will, we believe, weaken in the future for reasons generally stated in the text. It is already observable that skilled labour is more adaptable in many callings than it used to be, because its specialism is more in intelligence and less in dexterity, and intelligence specialised in one field can be applied in another as a narrow dexterity cannot. But until the ideal is reached training may be essential for such as are displaced from a skilled calling by a sudden and abnormal contraction of its demand for labour; and public authorities may find it necessary to provide rough work periodically for those turned into the streets by business depression, bearing in mind the importance of careful selection of the applicants for work, of strict supervision, continuous employment and of securing that wages shall be beneath the normal. The under-employment connected with seasonality can be partly removed by the dove-tailing together of different classes of seasonal work through the agency of Labour Exchanges.

The chief means of mitigating the distress due to unemployment is insurance against it, or generally more providence, which the future should certainly have in store if we believe that progress perfects individuals. For many years at least, nevertheless, encouragement of insurance and providence may be essential; but it is urgent that we should bear in mind that, in view of the

dispositions of many of those who suffer most from unemployment, the provision of work is as important almost as the provision of income. Another and most excellent means of mitigating the distress resulting from the temporary contraction of employment is to be found in the spreading of unemployment over all in the trade, so that, in case of this method being perfect, all get a little less work and no people are deprived of occupation altogether. In Chapter III. we have examined the forms of this method and given examples of the extent to which it is pursued. The more intricate machinery is, the higher is the special value to a business of the higher quality of labour, and the more is the employer disposed, therefore, to meet depression in this way. We may certainly hope that the proportion of labour of high quality will rise, and that consequently this policy will be encouraged. Much development of it cannot be expected under present conditions. It is beyond dispute that a large body of semi-efficient labour is intermingled with efficient labour in industry. As soon as trade becomes bad employers seize the opportunity to weed out the former. Efforts are made to keep good hands on at some kind of work so that they may not be lost or demoralised for times of normal trade, but nothing but gain results from getting rid of the inefficient as soon as possible. Inefficiency is partly the result of insufficient or unsuitable education, even when it is immediately traceable to moral and physical deficiencies. Character and efficiency hang together. There can be no doubt but that improved and extended education and its closer adaptation to the needs of the scholars would be productive of a marked reduction in the numbers of those unfortunate people thronging the streets to-day who are only just fit for employment—and perhaps not for regular employment—when business is brisk, and of those who are so unimaginative and unadaptable that they struggle for the bare pittance which can be extracted from a sinking demand for their particular kind of skill.

INDEX.

Able-bodied, relief of, 102.
Accidents in Workshops, 6–7, 58–9, 84.
Afforestation, 18, 26, 116, 132.
African War, South, 95.
Age-distribution among unemployed, 72–8, 91.
    tables, 73, 74, 75.
Age, relation of, to employment, 4–5, 58.
Aliment, home, 22–3.
Ancoats, census of unemployment, 70, 76, 79, 82, 86, 91.
Applicants for relief-work. See Distress Committees.
Apprentices, 89.
Assistance, Authorities, 20, 25, 28.
    home, 19, 26.
    institutional, 20.
Authorities, Local—provision of work by. See Relief-work.

Balfour, Gerald, 9.
Barrow-in-Furness, applicants to Distress Committee, 64, 117.
    distress at, 38.
    relief work at, 116, 117.
Bavaria, labour exchanges in, 141–2.
Beamers, 57.
Belgium, insurance against unemployment in, 112.
Berlin, labour exchanges, 139, 141–2.
Blackburn, age-distribution of unemployed, 75.
    applicants to Distress Committee, 64, 117.
    relief-work at, 116, 117.
Bleachers, 82.
Boiler-makers, United Society of, 5.
Boiler-making, 57.
Bolton, applicants to Distress Committee, 64, 117.
    relief-work at, 116–7, 118, 122.
Bookbinding, 82, 107.
Boot and shoe trade, 53, 106, 108, 109.
Booth, Charles, 69, 148–9.
Bootle, applicants to Distress Committee, 64, 117.
    relief-work at, 117.
Bowley, A. L., 103–4.
Boys, 12, 90.
Brunner, Mond & Company, percentage of accidents in workshops of, 58.

Budget, wage-earner's family, 104.
Builders, 82.
Burnley, applicants to Distress Committee, 64, 117.
relief work at, 116, 117.
Bury, applicants to Distress Committee, 64, 117.
relief work at, 117, 122.

Capital, 96, 105.
Carpenters, 38, 43, 57, 76, 107.
Carters, 82.
Casual Labour among women, 86, 87.
causation of, 146, 151.
decrease of, 3, 12, 14, 146–9.
Census of Unemployment, 70, 135.
Ancoats. See Ancoats.
Manchester, 44, 71, 80, 82, 86, 90.
Chalmelle, La (Paris), 128.
Chamberlain Circular (1886), 9, 28, 123.
Changes, Industrial, 78.
Charity Organisation Committee, 148.
Charwomen, 87, 90.
Child Labour, 7, 15.
China, exports to, 98.
Clerks, 82, 89, 90.
Climate, effect of, on production, 105.
Clothing trades, 82, 90.
Coachmakers, 57.
Collieries, accidents in, 59.
Colliers, 106, 108, 109, 110.
Colonies, Labour, 18, 20, 25, 128–132, 150.
Conclusions, 150–3.
Continuation classes, 12, 78, 79, 90.
Contraction of Work among women workers, 87.
bearing of, on short time, 46–7, 108.
chart of, 55–6, 107–8.
methods of dealing with, 45–6, 53–6, 106–7.
table of, 49–50, 84.
Cooks, 88.
Co-operative Societies, 71, 86.
Co-ordination of Labour Exchanges, 144.
Cotton Trade, accidents in, 59.
contraction of work in, 47, 53, 101.
unemployment in, 44, 47, 51, 53.

Decasualization of Labour, 14, 147–9.
Dendy, Miss, 131.
Depression of Trade, renewal of plant during, 35, 97.
Detention Colonies, 18, 25, 128, 130, 150.
Dismissal of hands, 51, 54, 55, 56, 107–8, 110, 111.
Distress Committees, age-distribution of applicants to, 75.
applicants to, 60–1, 64, 63–7, 74, 80, 83, 117, 123–6.
areas which have no, 64.
duration of previous employment of applicants to, 81.
duration of unemployment of applicants to, 79.
labour exchanges under, 138.
Lancashire, 63.
physique of applicants to, 83.
qualifications of applicants to, 75.
trade-analysis of applicants to, 82.
unemployed not registered by, 11, 65.
work provided by, 116–133.
Dock Labourers, 75, 146, 147–9.
Domestic Economy, 23, 90.
Domestic Servants, 88, 89, 90.
Dressmakers, 89.
Drunkards, 78.
Dublin Labour Exchange, 88.
Dyers, 82.

Economic progress, 68, 78.
Edinburgh Labour Exchange, 88.
Education. See Training.
Elasticity of Wages, 39, 40, 62, 97.
Emigration, 18.
Employment, agencies for boys and girls, 78, 145.
cul-de-sac, 2, 78.
duration of, 80, 81.
irregularity of, 93–104.
volume of, 54.
Employment-relief, 117, 121.
Engineering, 34, 37, 41, 76, 82, 107.
Engineers, Amalgamated Society of, 5, 77.
England and Wales, applicants to Distress Committees in, 117, 119.
relief-work in, 117.

Factory operatives, 82, 90.
Farm colonies. See colonies.

Feeble-minded, the, 68, 131.
Finance, organisation of, 96.
Foreign Trade, 101.
Friendly Societies, membership of, 71, 86.
Furnishing Trades, 82, 107, 109.

German Labour Exchanges, 11, 136, 139, 141, 142, 144, 145.
Ghent, insurance against unemployment at, 112, 113.
Girls, 88, 90, 91.
Glasgow Labour Exchange, 88.
Glass Trade, 51, 54.
Gorton, applicants to Distress Committee, 64, 117
relief-work at, 116, 117.
Guardians, Boards of, 67.
Harvests, failure of, 98.
Hat Trade, felt, 107, 109.
Heywood, applicants to Distress Committee, 64, 117.
labour exchange founded by employers, 139.
relief-work at, 117, 118, 122.
Home conditions improved by relief-work, 121.
Horsekeepers, 82.
Hosiery Trade, 52, 53.
Hotel Servants, 90.
Housekeepers, 88.

Index numbers of prices, 100.
India, 98, 99.
Industry, changes in, 54, 96, 114.
Insurance, against accident, 6–7, 58–9.
against unemployment, 16, 24, 71, 86, 109, 152.
continental methods of, 17, 112.
Iron and Steel Industries, 54.
Ironers, 90.
Ironfounders, Friendly Society of, 5.
Intelligence, demand for, 2, 78.

Joiners, 38, 43, 57, 76, 107.

Labour, casual, 83, 86, 87.
demand for, greater than supply, 143.
Minister of, 18, 22.
relation of relief work to demand for, 126.
reserve of, 13, 15.

Labour, skilled, 83, 90.
unskilled, 82, 83, 90.
Labour Colonies. See Colonies.
Labour Exchanges, 11, 14, 89, 105, 109, 121, 132, 134—149, 152.
age-distribution of applicants to, 73.
duration of unemployment among applicants to, 79.
for women, 88.
inefficiency of, 143.
physique of applicants to, 83.
registers of, 62–3, 72.
trade-analysis of applicants to, 82.
work done by, 141–2.
Labour, Lump of, fallacy, 127.
Labour Gazette, 33.
Labour-saving devices, 96.
Labour-tests, 120, 121.
Labour, transference of, to better paid callings, 8, 104.
Labourers, 82.
Lancashire, applicants to Distress Committees in, 117, 119, 125.
area of, suitable for afforestation, 132.
labour exchanges in, 137, 141–2.
relief-work in, 117, 128.
Laundry Work, 90.
Linen Trade, 51, 53.
Lingfield, colony at, 128.
Liverpool, age-distribution of unemployed, 75.
applicants to Distress Committee, 64, 117, 124.
applicants to labour exchange, 62, 88.
docks, labour at, 146–8.
labour exchange, 141–2.
relief-work in, 116, 117, 118, 121, 122, 123.
unemployed women and girls at, 88, 90.
Livesey, Sir George, 6.
Loafers, 9, 69, 71, 78.
Loan Board, Public Works, 28.
Loans, local, 115.
Local Government Board, 11, 19, 115, 117, 122.
London, Central (Unemployed) Body for, age-distribution of applicants to, 75.
applicants to Labour Exchange, 73, 81, 83, 88, 117, 119, 126.
labour exchanges under, 137, 141–2, 144.
relief-work provided by, 117.
London and India Docks Company—method of dealing with labour, 147–9.

Machinery, new, 78, 84, 96, 151.
Manchester, age distribution of unemployed, 72, 74, 91.
applicants to Distress Committee, 64, 117.
applicants to Labour Exchange, 62, 72, 80, 83, 88.
census of unemployment, 44, 71, 74, 82, 86, 90.
dock labour, 149.
duration of unemployment at, 79.
labour exchange, 141–2.
relief work at, 116, 117, 118, 128–130, 131.
Ship Canal Company, 149.
trade-analysis of unemployed at, 82.
unemployed women and girls, 88, 90.
Marriage, percentage of unemployed married, 71, 86.
Marple Dale Farm Colony, 128, 130.
Middleton, applicants to Distress Committee, 64, 117.
relief work at, 116, 117.
Military Training, 12.
Milliners, 89.
Mother's helps, 88.

Needle women, 90.
Northrop looms, 57.

Occupations, of unemployed, 82.
subsidiary, 3, 105.
Oldham, applicants to Distress Committee, 64, 117.
relief work at, 116, 117, 118.
Output, limitation of, fallacy underlying, 40.
Output, variation in, 54.
Overtrading, 93–4, 97.

Parlour-maids, 88.
Paris (La Chalmelle), 128.
Paupers, numbers relieved, 67, 99.
Physique, 71, 83, 86.
Plumbers, 38, 107.
Poor Law, 23, 62, 99, 116, 118.
Royal Commission's Report, 1–28.
Population, Age-distribution of occupied, in Lancashire, 73.
Porters, 82.
Preference lists, 148.
Preston, Applicants to Distress Committee, 64, 117.
relief work at, 116, 117.

Prices, movements in general, 100, 102, 104.
Printing Trades, 82, 90, 107, 109.
Production, 106.
changes in methods of, 93, 135.
Provident Societies, membership of, 71, 86.

Relief Work, 8, 11, 19, 25, 60, 69, 115—133.
proper organisation of, 120.
relation of, to general demand for labour, 11, 126.
table of work done, 117.
value of labour on, 10, 120.
Restaurant Servants, 90.
Rochdale, applications to Distress Committee, 64, 117.
relief work at, 116, 117.

Salford, age distribution of unemployed of, 74.
applicants to Distress Committee, 64, 74, 80, 83, 117.
applicants to labour exchange, 62, 88.
duration of unemployment at, 79.
labour exchange, 141–2.
relief work at, 116, 117, 118, 122.
St. Helens, applications to Distress Committee, 64, 117.
relief work at, 116, 117.
Salteye Farm Colony, 116, 128–130.
Sandlebridge Colony, 131.
Sauerbeck, Augustus, 101.
Savings, subsidization of, 112.
Sawyers, 109.
Seasonality, 3, 93, 105–9, 132, 152.
charts of, 107–8.
insurance against, 109–114.
Secretaries, 89.
Sewing Rooms, 92.
Shanghai, exchange with, 98.
Shipbuilding, 34, 37, 38, 41, 107, 110.
Shop-assistants, 82, 89, 90.
Short-time, 45–59, 110.
as remedy for unemployment, 39, 45, 52, 153.
chart of, 55–6, 108.
not accounted for in trade union returns of unemployment, 38.
shown by employers' returns, 47, 52.
table of, 48–9.
Silk Trade, 51.

Silver, fall in value of, 98.
Situations, offered, 88.
filled, 88.
Skill, demand for, 2, 79.
Smith, Sir Hubert Llewellyn, 9.
Social Service Union, 128.
Steel Industries, contraction of work in, 54.
changes in, 56.
Stockport, 123, 125.
Summary, 150–3.
Superintendents, 89.

Time-lag, social, 135, 145.
Trades, analysis of unemployed by, 82.
Bookbinding, 107.
Boot and shoe, 53, 106.
Carpentering, 38, 43.
Clothing, 90.
Coal-mining, 106, 110.
Cotton, 44, 51, 53.
Decaying, 113.
Engineering, 34, 37, 41.
Glass, 51, 53.
Hosiery, 52.
Linen, 51, 53.
Metal, 34, 43.
Plumbing, 38.
Printing, 90, 107.
Seasonal, 105–9.
Shipbuilding, 34, 37, 38, 41, 110.
Silk, 51.
Various, 42, 43, 48–9.
Woollen, 51, 53.
Worsted, 51, 53.
Trade, Board of, 7, 13, 34, 65.
Trade Cycle, the, 8, 17, 24, 35, 40, 93–7, 102, 115, 152
chart of, 100.
insurance against, 109.
Trade, foreign, 99, 100, 102.
Trade Unionists Unemployed, 33–44, 71, 86, 88, 145.
Trade Unions, benefits of, 35, 37, 38, 110, 111, 136.
returns of, 33–38, 106–7.
standard wage of, 112.

Training, agricultural, 129.
depôts. See colonies.
technological, 12, 78, 79, 90, 150, 153.
Typists, 89.

Under-employment, 2, 14, 15.
Unemployable, 3, 68, 78, 111, 130, 150.
Unemployed, age distribution of, 73, 74, 75, 77.
analysis of Trades of, 81.
Ancoats, Census of, 70, 76.
character of, 68.
duration of previous employment, 80.
labour value of, 120, 122.
not registered, 63, 65, 87.
percentage of population, 70, 71.
Unemployed Benefit, 36, 37.
Unemployed Women, percentage of population, 70.
Unemployed Workmen Act, 9, 23, 118, 121, 138.
Unemployed, voluntary contributions in aid of, 11, 117.
Unemployment, among artisans, 49–51.
among non-unionists, 60–70, 113, 117.
among trade-unionists, 33–44, 60, 61, 68, 71, 88.
among women, 85–92.
due to physical incapacity, 71, 86, 128.
causes of, 38, 68, 71, 83, 90, 93, 113.
character of the problem, 30.
chart of, 37.
cyclical, 93–104, 132.
duration of, 79, 91.
economic, 24, 93, 151.
index number of, 35.
insurance against, 109–114.
nature of the problem, 30.
never wholly non-existent, 31, 134.
personal factors in, 10, 23, 68, 71, 84, 86, 89, 110, 150.
relation to age 73, 74, 77.
relation to contraction of work, 52–6, 159.
seasonal, 105–9, 132.
severe among the young, 77.
short-time, 86.
table of, 42, 43, 81, 82, 84, 88, 101.
United Kingdom, applicants to Distress Committees in, 117, 119.

labour exchanges in, 137, 141–2.
relief work in, 117.
United States, 96.
Unskilled Labour, 83.

Vagrancy, Committee on, 86.
Vagrants, 66, 128.
Voluntary contributions in aid of Unemployed, 11, 118.

Wages, 5, 39, 86, 103.
elasticity of, 6, 39, 40, 62, 97.
for relief-work, 121.
monthly variation in total amount, 53.
Warrington, applicants to labour exchange, 62.
labour exchange in, 138, 141–2.
unemployed women and girls, 88.
Washerwomen, 90.
Watford Labour Exchange, 88.
Widows, 86.
Wigan, 64.
Woodworking Trades, 82, 107, 109.
Woollen Trade, contraction of work in, 51, 53.
Women, age-distribution, 91
applicants to Distress Committee, 124.
applicants to labour exchanges, 141–2.
displacing men, 7.
numbers of workers, 85.
sewing rooms for, 116.
trade-unionists, 86.
unemployment among, 85–92.
work for, 92.
work of labour exchanges, 89.
Work, Provision of. See Relief Work.
Workmen's Compensation Act, effect of, 6, 58.
Worsted Trade, 51.
contraction of work in, 51, 53.

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